



Israel Report

Alex Altshuler, Ronen Mandelkern,
Roy Karadag (Coordinator)

Sustainable Governance Indicators 2022

©vege - stock.adobe.com

Executive Summary

Israel has experienced a year full of positive and negative developments. 2021 was characterized by the last of four elections in two years; confrontation with Gaza; the fragility of the education system, with teaching split between in-person instruction and online learning; multiple developments related to the ongoing COVID-19 epidemic; and an economic rebound due largely to the country's ongoing COVID-19 vaccination campaign, a recovering labor market and a booming tech sector.

Regarding the COVID-19 crisis, on 17 March 2021, Israel became the world leader in the number of citizens vaccinated (Simon 2021). The COVID-19 vaccination campaign – combined with the complete ban on commercial flights to Israel, and the closure of schools, commercial centers and other places of public gatherings – made it seem like the pandemic was under control. The Green Pass Policy was introduced to allow for the reopening of the economy, the education system and the cultural sphere with a minimum risk of elevating morbidity, as well as to encourage vaccinations. However, during the second part of the year, the public began to experience a sense of confusion, which was reflected in constantly changing regulations and government difficulties in explaining the regulations. The new government introduced softer restrictions, and granted residents greater freedom of choice and room for discretionary decision-making to navigate the complexity and inherent uncertainty of the pandemic.

Regarding Israeli politics, after three rounds of elections that failed to produce a government, a new government with a very narrow majority was formed following a fourth round. Naftali Bennet was appointed prime minister, sending Benjamin Netanyahu – Israel's longest-reigning premier who is currently standing trial on corruption charges – into opposition. The new coalition is Israel's most diverse government to date, and includes parties from both ends of the political spectrum and, for the first time since the country's establishment in 1948, an Arab party. Moreover, at the end of 2021, having failed to approve a state budget since the end of 2019, Israel's parliament approved a state budget for 2021–2022, providing the country with some prospect of economic and administrative stability.

In the national security arena, an Israeli-Palestinian conflict escalated yet again, when a barrage of rockets from Gaza hit Israel in May. The level of intensity was unprecedented: more than a thousand missiles were launched, leaving six dead and many injured. This round of confrontation also generated internal tension, instability and riots inside the country, with mobs of Jews and Arabs targeting each other in southern Israel and in Israel's mixed cities.

Regarding the education system, although the system formally returned to in-person teaching in 2021, the Education Ministry reported that – with the 2020–2021 school year overshadowed by the pandemic, and associated school closures and remote learning – students' basic learning and reading skills declined by 30% compared to previous years (Kashti 2021). These major gaps in learning are most clearly seen among children from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

Finally, in economic terms, Israeli high-tech demonstrated a profound resilience in the face of the COVID-19 crisis thanks to its ability to identify current and potential global opportunities created by COVID-19, and to react quickly to the new work environment and conditions of uncertainty. The tremendous success of the high-tech scene, however, introduced a higher level of polarization to the Israeli labor market, where sectors characterized by lower wages and less-sophisticated skills (e.g., agriculture, tourism, hospitality and food services) showed a major decline in employment and their recovery has lagged behind the rest of the economy.

Citation:

Kashti, Or. 2021, "COVID's Untold Impact: Israeli Elementary Schools Witness a One Third Drop in Learning Skills" Haaretz. January 12, 2022. Retrieved from: <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/premium-education-minister-kids-now-at-greater-risk-out-of-school-than-in-1.9706181>

Simon, Ben. 2021, "With much of country vaccinated, Israeli leaders able to head out to meet voters," The times of Israel, 12 of January 2022, retrieved from: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/with-much-of-country-vaccinated-israeli-leaders-head-out-to-meet-voters/2>

Key Challenges

Israel has a long and deeply rooted history of policymaking improvisation (Sharkansky and Zalmanovitch 2000). Indeed, improvisation, in contrast to planning, is one of the main characters of its policy style. Regarding long-term processes and strategic planning, Israel usually shows weak policy performance. The above mindset implies some major strengths and weaknesses in times of crisis. On the one hand, it allows for quick and flexible

policy responses, without being dependent on “heavy” and long bureaucratic procedures and mechanisms. On the other hand, it is usually characterized by a lack of pre-designed, comprehensive and integrated inter-sectoral planning, and effective and sophisticated executive mechanisms, which could be utilized and adequately adapted during large-scale crises. Strategically thinking, it seems a more effective balance needs to be found between creativity/flexibility and thorough preparation. Therefore, special attention should be paid to the design and development of national inter-sectoral bodies, which can strategically handle large-scale crises and emergencies in the future.

In this respect, the substantial assistance with handling the COVID-19 crisis provided by the Israeli Defense Forces, including its dedicated department for dealing with emergencies (i.e., the Home Front Command, an operational body that can be put into action, relatively quickly, for almost any civilian purpose), did not help develop major strategic civilian inter-sectoral capabilities throughout the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. Beyond that, the government’s centralized management of the ongoing crisis, which came at the expense of strengthening and aiding local municipalities, had several major advantages in terms of speed and coordination of the response, but also many disadvantages. As experience from other countries has shown, local municipalities could have played a crucial role in managing the crisis, and are much closer to the unique cultural, communal, social and economic needs of the diverse communities living in the country.

When it comes to policy tools and legislation in general, Israel has entered the epidemic crisis without up-to-date legislation for disease control and large-scale emergencies in general. Rather it had an outdated ordinance dating back to the pre-independence British mandate. The sections relating to health emergencies have not been updated since the 1940s, which has created a legislative vacuum and the need for an agile solution. This led to the use of ad hoc policy tools in a hasty, rapid manner, and in a way that did not allow for effective and comprehensive policy discussion, and even led to policy decisions that were not based on public health rationales. Creating strategic and comprehensive legislation that deal with public health and other types of emergencies could lower dependency on such improvised solutions.

Planning and focusing on long-term processes will foster greater resilience to pressure from different political groups and interest groups. In this context, the Israeli government has preferred general rather than differential policy responses throughout the crises. One reason for this lies in the government’s inability to implement painful restrictions on local municipalities. Israel’s lack of pre-discussed, nuanced and balanced solutions, and relatively low capacity to act in a nuanced way disproportionately harms the economy, and impairs

the government's ability to advance proportional and effective policy.

In general, Israel has manifested a high level of resilience and relatively rapid response throughout the crisis, but at the same only partial utilization of the country's ability to creatively and strategically navigate through the ongoing complexity and uncertainty caused by the pandemic.

Citation:

Sharkansky, Ira & Yair Zalmanovitch. 2000. Improvisation in Public Administration and Policy Making in Israel. *Public Administration Review* 60(4): 321-329.

Party Polarization

According to SGI data on ideological polarization in party systems, left-right polarization within the Israel party system is moderate and has even decreased over the last decade. However, over the last several years, polarization has increased substantially and the trend seems to be sustainable.

The four rounds of elections between September 2019 and March 2021, and the current situation following the last elections exemplify this point. Since September 2019, the polarization between the parties supporting the former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the parties opposing him is huge. Following the March 2021 elections, the anti-Netanyahu block formed the "change government" headed by Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, which has a tiny majority in the Israeli parliament (the Knesset) of 61 out of 120 seats. The working relationship between the opposition and coalition government is almost non-existent, with opposition parties practically boycotting most of the parliament's work. The only party that does not support Netanyahu or Bennett is the left-wing Joint List, which is primarily supported by Arab voters and has six seats in the Israeli parliament.

Overall, party polarization is very high, which challenges the effective management of "routine" issues as well as the handling of the ongoing, multi-dimensional crisis caused by the COVID-19 epidemic.

According to the Israel Democracy Institute, political polarization is considered by the Israeli public to be one of the major sources of internal tension in Israeli society with 32% of the respondents viewing it as a major source of social tension. (Score: 4)

Citation:

Israel Democracy Institute (2022), "Israeli Democracy Index 2021: Democratic Values," January 12, 2022. Retrieved from <https://en.idi.org.il/articles/37857>

Hakman, Inbal (2021), "Was the Coronavirus Year Really One of Deepening Polarization?," The Jewish Policy People Institute (JPPI), January 12, 2022. Retrieved from <http://jppi.org.il/en/article/was-the-coronavirus-year-really-one-of-deepening-polarization/#.YeL-fv5BzIU>

Sustainable Policies

I. Economic Policies

Economy

Economic Policy
Score: 7

Economic policy in the last year has mainly focused on coping with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and has substantially diverged before and after the formation of the new government in June 2021. To compensate for the negative impact on economic activity of the lockdown policies, the previous government implemented various short-term plans to support households and businesses. These included extended unemployment benefits, ad hoc universal cash benefits for households, support for the self-employed, and compensation and employee retention grants for businesses (Israel Ministry of Finance, 2020). Government assistance effectively met the needs of businesses and offset the high costs of operation, allowing them to survive the enforced closures and increase employment once the crisis began to subside (Bank of Israel, 2020).

A central shortcoming in the previous government's economic policies was the lack of timeliness and clarity. The government did not act fast enough to provide businesses and self-employed workers with the necessary assistance at the outbreak of the crisis. Instead, in the first few months, the government provided only short-term, limited financial assistance (Ilan, 2020). Consequently, about 70,000 businesses were expected to close in Israel in 2020 – an increase of about 50% compared to 2019 (Dovrat-Meseritz, 2020).

In contrast to the previous government, the new government has focused primarily on keeping the economy open and on avoiding lockdowns. Concurrently, instead of the wide-ranging compensation mechanisms adopted

by the previous government, the new government stopped the continuous extension of unemployment benefits and focused support for businesses. Like the previous government, the current government has committed to decreasing government regulation on economic activity. It has also committed to reducing the rising cost of living in Israel by lowering tariffs on agricultural products.

Israel's strong external balance sheet has been resilient to the pandemic. Israel has recorded current account surpluses (CAS) each year since 2003 and the surplus increased to 5% of GDP in 2020. Fitch Ratings expects annual CAS to be 4% of GDP on average between 2021 and 2023, as growth in service exports remains robust, driven primarily by high-tech sectors. CAS combined with strong net FDI inflows has led to appreciation pressures and contributed to a sharp increase in foreign-exchange reserves since 2019. Due to the Bank of Israel's interventions to contain the appreciation, foreign-exchange reserves reached \$200 billion in mid-2021 (approximately two years of estimated current external payments, well above the peer median of four months) from \$126 billion in 2019 (Fitch Ratings 2021).

Citation:

Bank of Israel. 2020. "Remarks by the Governor of the Bank of Israel at the Cabinet meeting on the bill for the Economic Assistance Program," Announcements and publications, retrieved from <https://www.boi.org.il/he/NewsAndPublications/PressReleases/Pages/22-9-20.aspx>

Bank of Israel. 2020. "The Governor's remarks at a cabinet meeting on the issue of a grant for all Israeli citizens," Announcements and publications, retrieved from <https://www.boi.org.il/he/NewsAndPublications/PressReleases/Pages/19-7-20.aspx>

Barkat Amiram. 2020. "A grant for every citizen? New research states that a large portion of the money has been rolled over to overdraft," Globes, website (Hebrew), October 28, 2020 retrieved from <https://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1001347476>

Dovrat-Meseritz Adi. 2020. "Up to 70,000 Israeli Businesses Forecast to Go Under Amid Coronavirus Crisis," Haaretz, retrieved from <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/business/.premium-up-to-70-000-israeli-businesses-forecast-to-go-under-amid-coronavirus-crisis-1.8844610>

Fitch Ratings (2021), "RATING ACTION COMMENTARY," Retrieved from: <https://www.fitchratings.com/research/sovereigns/fitch-affirms-israel-at-a-outlook-stable-29-07-2021>

Ilan Sharar. 2020. "The Provisional Government has broken the records of emergency regulations," calcalist, website (Hebrew), retrieved from <https://www.calcalist.co.il/local/articles/0,7340,L-3811853,00.html>

Israel Ministry of Finance 2020. "Economic Security Net 2020-2021," Retrieved from https://www.gov.il/he/departments/news/press_09072020

The Knesset Website. 2020. "Knesset passes bill to give one-time stimulus grants to most Israeli citizens," News, Retrieved from: <https://main.knesset.gov.il/EN/News/PressReleases/Pages/press29720v.aspx>.

Labor Markets

Labor Market
Policy
Score: 7

Israel entered the pandemic with a sound labor market – historically high rates of labor force participation (which are nevertheless relatively low in comparison to the OECD average), particularly for women, and low rates of unemployment. However, when the pandemic hit, Israel adopted a furlough model, which meant that workers placed on a leave of absence were entitled to receive unemployment benefits, but only if they did not work at all. These workers retained their contractual connection with their employers, but there were no options for continuing to work part-time while receiving partial unemployment benefits (Zontag, Epstein, and Weiss 2020). Concurrently, the government extended the duration of unemployment benefits for workers on furlough until June 2021, allowing businesses to put all of their workers on unpaid leave regardless of how much their revenues were hurt. According to a report published in August by the Israeli employment service, while on the one hand this binary policy created some certainty in the economy, helped businesses stay open for longer and gave employees a measure of relief, on the other hand it also hurt the connection between employee and employer, created a negative incentive for employees to return to work, and will result in much higher long-term unemployment. Indeed, the labor market participation rate dropped by two percentage points. The adoption of a more flexible model, in which the government would cover only the hours of lost work rather than pay unemployment compensation for entire salaries, would have cost the government less and would have lowered the unemployment rate. The government could have also invested more in vocational training, which would have created incentives for workers to go back to work.

More generally, the Israeli labor market continues to be characterized by a sharp divide between high earners, especially in the booming financial and technological sectors, and low earners, especially in the low end of the service sector. This results in a very high low-pay incidence. Recently, the government decided to raise the monthly minimum wage from ILS 5,300 to ILS 6,000 over the next four years. A persistent challenge is the low participation and skills levels of ultra-Orthodox Jews and Arab Israelis (particularly men) in the labor market. Government policies that aim to increase employment among these populations have so far seen limited success.

Peleg, Bar (2021), "Income Inequality in Israel Widens in 2021, Despite a Drop Last Year," Haaretz. Retrieved from: <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-income-inequality-widened-in-2021-despite-economic-rebound-1.10502510>

OECD (2022), Labour productivity forecast (indicator). doi: 10.1787/cb12b189-en (Accessed on 05 January 2022)

Zontag, Noam, Gil Epstein, and Avi Weiss (2020). "The Israeli Labor Market Under the Coronavirus: An Overview." State of the nation report: Society, economy and policy in Israel

The State Comptroller. 2020. "The Government's Handling of the Unemployed and Work-Intensives in the Corona Crisis: Interim Findings for a Report to be Published in 2021," Retrieved from <https://www.mevaker.gov.il/sites/DigitalLibrary/Pages/Publications/710.aspx>

Israeli Employment Service. 2020. Information and publications, "Continuation of the Corona Crisis: The Need for Rapid and Focused Intervention for the Encouragement of Employment and Human Capital Development," retrieved from <https://www.taasuka.gov.il/he/InfoAndPublications/ResearchAndReviews/pages/coronaencouragingemployment.aspx> Public Health Order (New Coronavirus 2019) (Instructions for the Employer of a Home Insulation Employee) (Temporary Order), 2020," retrieved from <https://www.nevo.co.il/general/CoronaUpdates.aspx#Item08>

The Jerusalem Post, "Israel's minimum wage is increasing: Here's what you need to know," January 26, 2022, <https://www.jpost.com/business-and-innovation/banking-and-finance/article-694611>

Taxes

Tax Policy
Score: 6

Israel's taxation policy appears to be quite effective in terms of raising revenues. Over the past five years, Israeli authorities have collected more in tax revenue than had been projected in the government's budget proposals. Nevertheless, tax revenues in Israel are comparatively low and this sets limits on government spending.

Israel's taxation policy is somewhat regressive. A large share of taxes in Israel are indirect. This includes VAT, which is levied equally on all products. Furthermore, although the direct income tax is progressively structured, and a large portion of the population makes too little money to pay any income tax at all, the system creates a curve that forces middle-income individuals to pay proportionately more tax than high-income individuals. This apparent distortion is an intentional economic strategy meant to induce growth by reducing the tax burden associated with investments and companies. While controversial, it is not necessarily unfair as such.

Israel utilizes its tax system as a political instrument. For example, it offers tax reductions to army veterans and for Jewish immigrants, thereby discriminating against Palestinian citizens. At the same time, various tax exemptions have a valid rationale (e.g., assisting working parents and encouraging higher education) and do not appear to violate the principle of horizontal or vertical equality.

The Encouragement of Capital Investments Law (ECIL) provides tax discounts for factories and businesses that invest in peripheral areas. This is done both to keep Israel's taxes competitive in the global market and to incentivize the creation of jobs in disenfranchised regions. The ECIL has been

criticized in recent years, especially at the end of 2017 following the large layoff of Teva employees – an Israeli pharmaceutical company that had received substantial tax benefits.

The tax system is sporadically used to promote environmental goals, for example, in the context of taxes on energy and cars. The new government has introduced a new tax on disposable plasticware, but this was not part of an overall strategy.

Citation:

Barket, Amiram, "Israel's budget surpluses are becoming a habit," Globes, 15.10.2017: <http://www.globes.co.il/en/article-israels-budget-surpluses-are-becoming-a-habit-1001207772>

Medina, Barak. "Discrimination Under the Auspices of the State." Ha'aretz, May 20th, 2014.

OECD, Revenue Statistics 2021 – Israel, <https://www.oecd.org/tax/revenue-statistics-israel.pdf>

Stub, Zev, "More challenges arise for Israel's tax on disposable utensils," The Jerusalem Post, November 24, 2021, <https://www.jpost.com/environment-and-climate-change/more-challenges-arise-for-israels-tax-on-disposable-utensils-686864>

Waksman, Avi, "Wanted: A Tax Policy for Israel's Economy, Not for Elections," Haaretz, 20.09.2018: <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/business/wanted-a-tax-policy-for-israel-s-economy-not-for-elections-1.6492218>

Vaxman, Avi, "End to the tax surplus celebration? 600 million shekels forecast miss," The Marker, 09.07.2018: <https://www.themarket.com/news/macro/1.6249613>

Budgets

Budgetary Policy
Score: 7

Israel's fiscal policy is characterized by rather strict budgetary discipline, which is maintained by the significant power of the Ministry of Finance, a fiscal framework that sets limits on public deficits and annual increases in public spending, and the so-called Arrangements Law. The Arrangements Law is an omnibus law that is passed in parallel with each budget, consists of numerous restrictions and amendments, and is designed to secure the state's financial goals.

Israel's comparatively strong fiscal position was maintained during the pandemic. In terms of the deficit, Israel posted a budget deficit (ILBUD=ECI) of 4.6% of gross domestic product by the end of 2021, down from 5.5% during the same period in 2020. The improvement came as an economic rebound that has led to higher-than-expected tax revenue. Over the past year, tax income is up 23.1% from the same period in 2020 (BOI 2021). Consequently, the increase of public debt has been relatively low in comparison to other OECD countries.

The ILS 609 billion (4 billion) spending plan for 2021 is the first budget Israel has passed since 2018. This delay was due to a prolonged political deadlock, which saw successive governments fall before they could bring a proposal to the Knesset. The 2022 spending plan stands at ILS 562.9 billion (0 billion). The overall budget marks a major reorientation of Israel's allocation of resources and financial priorities in the coming years. It is based on the principles of streamlining government operations, upgrading public services, boosting economic competitiveness, cutting regulations to support public and private sector growth, limiting Israel's shadow economy, boosting transportation, housing, energy and technology infrastructure, and investing in human capital by training and integrating marginalized populations into the workforce (Ben David 2021).

The Knesset's approval of the 2021–2022 budget has reduced political uncertainty and risks to public finances, affirming the government's capacity to advance legislation. Fitch Ratings increased Israel's rating from A to A+. According to Fitch Ratings, "Israel's A+ rating balances a diversified, high value-added economy, which proved resilient to the COVID-19 pandemic, strong external finances and solid institutional strength" (Fitch Ratings 2021).

Citation:

Bank of Israel (BOI), "Economic indicators: Public Sector Activity," 2021. Retrieved from: <https://www.boi.org.il/en/DataAndStatistics/Pages/Indicators.aspx?Level=1&IndicatorId=5&Sid=5>

Fitch Ratings (2021), "RATING ACTION COMMENTARY," Retrieved from: <https://www.fitchratings.com/research/sovereigns/fitch-affirms-israel-at-a-outlook-stable-29-07-2021>

Kershner, Isabel (2021), "Israel Passes First Budget in More Than 3 Years in Lifeline for Government." The New York Times, 05 of January 2022. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/04/world/middleeast/israel-budget.html>

Knesset 2021. "Knesset Plenum votes to approve 2021-2022 state budget and Arrangements Law" Retrieved from: <https://main.knesset.gov.il/EN/News/PressReleases/Pages/press51121q.aspx>

Ben David, Ricky. 2021, "How much of a revolution? 13 key reforms in Israel's new State Budget," The times of Israel. Retrieved from: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/how-much-of-a-revolution-13-key-plans-in-israels-new-state-budget/>

Research, Innovation and Infrastructure

R&I Policy
Score: 9

Israel's research and development (R&D) sector is based on three pillars: scientific research performed primarily in academia, research conducted in government institutes, and research conducted by civil-industrial partnerships overseen by the Ministry of Finance. For many years, Israel has led the world in research and development (R&D) investment, spending more on R&D as a share of GDP than any other developed country.

A large portion of Israel's R&D policy is directed toward international cooperation. In 2019, Israel was engaged in around 70 different international cooperative research ventures with a variety of European countries and organizations. Overall, 90 Israeli companies have received grants or another financing to conduct R&D activities with companies from other countries. Israel has also signed 29 bilateral R&D agreements, which fund around 100 new projects each year, and is a partner in five EU programs, including Eureka, Eurostars, the Competitive and Innovation Program – Enterprise Europe Network (CIP-EEN), Galileo, and Sesar. In terms of R&D policy and budgets, the most significant international involvement is through framework programs, such as Horizon 2020, which are managed by the Israel-Europe R&D Directorate.

Despite Israel's strong R&D position at the beginning of the coronavirus crisis, the rate of the government's support for research in the fields of health, environment and infrastructure development was very low compared to other OECD countries. Only 0.5% of government investments in R&D were in the field of health (Buchnik, Klein & Getz, 2020). This long-term trend must be reversed if Israel is to maintain its position as a global leader in the field of innovation.

Despite the maturation and prosperity of Israel's high-tech industry, the market failures that characterize the industry are becoming more complex, and there is a greater need for private market participation in the risks inherent in seed and early-stage investments, especially against the background of increased later stage investment (Israel Innovation Authority 2021). Moreover, The Israeli high-tech industry is undergoing a transformation. More Israeli companies are preserving their independence rather than becoming R&D centers for multinational corporations as was customary in the past. A crucial question is whether this will lead to more diversified local manufacturing jobs and a change the current situation in which the fruits of R&D investment are mainly enjoyed by a small share of Israelis.

Citation:

Cornell University, INSEAD, and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), *The Global Innovation Index 2019: Creating Healthy Lives – The Future of Medical Innovation*, Genf 2019, <https://www.globalinnovationindex.org/gii-2019-report>

Innovation in Israel overview 2018-2019, Israel Innovation Authority, 2019 (Hebrew) https://innovationisrael.org.il/en/sites/default/files/2018-19_Innovation_Report.pdf

Dutta, Soumitra, Bruno Lanvin, and Sacha Wunsch-Vincent (Editors), *"The Global Innovation Index 2017. Innovation Feeding the World,"* <https://www.globalinnovationindex.org/gii-2017-report>

Cornell University, INSEAD, and WIPO, *"The Global Innovation Index 2019: Energizing the World with Innovation,"* Ithaca, Fontainebleau, and Geneva, 2018:

https://www.wipo.int/edocs/pubdocs/en/wipo_pub_gii_2019.pdf

Bilateral Programs, ISRED, 17.10.2018:
http://www.iserd.org.il/binational_programs

“EU – Israel Research and innovation cooperation – 20 years of success, partnership, and friendship,” The European Commission, 12.01.2017:
<https://ec.europa.eu/research/iscp/index.cfm?pg=israel>

Israel Innovation Authority (2021), “2021 Innovation Report,” 05 January 2022, Retrieved from:
<https://innovationisrael.org.il/sites/default/files/The%20Israel%20Innovation%20Report%202021.pdf>

Beeri, Tamar, “Start-Up Nation: Israel spends the most money in the world on R&D – WEF, The Jerusalem Post website, November 5, 2020, retrieved from <https://www.jpost.com/jpost-tech/start-up-nation-israel-spends-most-money-in-the-world-on-r-and-d-wef-648192>

Buchnik Tzipi, Klein Rinat, Getz Dafna. Medical research in Israel – the government must wake up before the next crisis Haifa, Israel, Shmuel Ne’eman Institute, November 2020, retrieved from <https://www.neaman.org.il/Medical-research-in-Israel-a-wake-up-call-for-the-government-before-the-next-crisis>

Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Science, Science, and Technology: Research and Development, n.d, accessed on January 10, 2020, retrieved from <https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/science/pages/science%20and%20technology-%20research%20and%20development.aspx>

Global Financial System

Stabilizing
Global Financial
System
Score: 8

Israel has several regulatory institutions tasked with supervising financial markets. The most prominent include the Supervisor of Banks at the Bank of Israel, the Capital Market, Insurance and Savings Authority at the Ministry of Finance, the Israel Securities Authority (ISA), and the Israel Antitrust Authority. These institutions are responsible for ensuring market stability and fair competition. In the aftermath of the global financial crisis, different government organizations worked to limit risk in the banking and insurance industry. Actions include tightening the rules on mortgages, adopting Basel III regulation and raising minimum capital ratios. Several committees have been formed to investigate structural reforms and submit policy recommendations. Both OECD and central bank assessments have been cautiously optimistic, with the latter pointing to important regulatory tools that are currently being developed for future implementation. In November 2019, Israel decided to establish a mechanism to oversee foreign investments, especially Chinese investments.

Israel’s Consumer Protection and Fairtrade Authority participates in various international forums to enhance cooperation and information transparency between Israel and other countries or economic organizations. According to the authority, most countries share similar practices with Israel, which facilitates information sharing and cooperation. For example, Israel is a

member of the OECD Committee on Consumer Policy, which publishes guidelines and recommendations on consumer policy in the OECD. Israel has adopted many of these recommendations. Israel is also one of the 60 countries that participate in the International Consumer Protection and Enforcement Network (ICPEN). ICPEN is responsible for research and analysis on consumption, facilitates the exchange of information, develops guidelines, and is involved in economic law enforcement activities as part of this network.

Citation:

“Financial stability report,” Bank of Israel 2014 (Hebrew). “Israel – Economic forecast summary,” November 2014. <http://www.oecd.org/economy/israel-economic-forecast-summary.htm>.

ISA annual report 2017, ISA website, 27.06.2018, <http://www.isa.gov.il/sites/ISAEng/1489/1512/Documents/ENG-FINAL.pdf>

Ministry of Finance, The Authority for Capital Market, Insurance and Savings, Annual report 2017 chapter 1, 01.07.2018(Hebrew), https://mof.gov.il/hon/documents/report2017_chapter1.pdf

The Consumer Protection and Fair Trade Authority – International Activity, Israel Government, 2019 (Hebrew) https://www.gov.il/he/Departments/General/cpfta_about_international_activity

Herb, Keinon, “Under U.S. Pressure, Israel Okays Mechanism to Oversee Chinese Investments,” Jerusalem Post, 30.10.2019, <https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Under-US-pressure-Israel-okays-mechanism-to-oversee-Chinese-investments-606326>

II. Social Policies

Education

Education Policy
Score: 7

Over the last decade (2010–2020), Israel’s education spending has increased by 25%, substantially more than the OECD average of 9% increment. However, due to population growth, spending per pupil remained stable. Teachers’ salaries have increased significantly in recent years and are now well above the national average salary. A possible reason for the salary increases is the rise in tertiary and quaternary education among teachers. This has led to some improvement in two major shortcomings in the education system: the relatively high number of pupils per teacher and the relatively low skill levels of teachers (Billas 2020).

The allocation of resources inside the educational system depends on national/religious divisions within it. There are four school streams: three for the Hebrew-speaking community (secular, religious and ultra-Orthodox Jews), and one for the Arabic-speaking community. Most ultra-Orthodox schools do

not include the basic curricula elements required by the Ministry of Education due to religious objection and, therefore, receive only 8.8% of the budget, significantly less than their pupil share (18%). While the budget of the Arab school system has increased significantly in recent years, lower-class Jewish pupils are still budgeted almost twice as much as Arabic pupils. These gaps affect the opportunities of these sectors and their achievements (as reflected in PISA tests results), as well as their potential to deal with crises and their financial strength (Dvir 2020).

The gaps mentioned above directly influence the ability of the weaker sectors to handle extreme situations. Defense needs in Israel required the government to create a plan for distance learning. When the coronavirus reached Israel, the educational system was somewhat prepared. For example, the foundation of home learning already existed, while systems and licenses for relevant software were acquired and used by students and teachers (Ministry of Education 2020). Despite these efforts, moving toward distance learning was not smooth. Some emergency protocols for rockets attack were relevant, but did not match perfectly to the pandemic. For example, pupils without access to a computer were supposed to team with their neighbors for mutual learning, which was impossible under social distance requirements.

To allow for the continuation of schooling during the pandemic, the education system moved to online teaching. While this allowed pupils to continue studying during the pandemic, it also exacerbated inequality among publics. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, in 2019, about 24% of households with children in Israel did not have access to the internet and 16% did not have a personal computer at home. About 78% of all Jewish households have an internet connection, but 51% of Arab households do not. Among Jews, the lack of internet connection is highest among the ultra-Orthodox community (Ilan 2020).

In response to these gaps, the Ministry of Education purchased 150,000 computers and provided internet connections (Kadri-Ovadia 2021). Although the government took measures to support those in need, criticism about the situation was still plentiful because learning via online platforms required a large amount of involvement by parents, who were not always available to help with online studying (Odem 2020).

Because of the social distancing policy, pre-primary schools were fully closed for an average of 64 days between 1 January 2020 and 20 May 2021. Meanwhile, primary schools were closed for 80 days, lower secondary for 139 days and upper secondary general schools for 112 days. In comparison, the respective closures were 55, 78, 92 and 101 days on average across the OECD

(OECD 2021). The latest developments, in addition to former gaps in the system, created a massive challenge and increased the differences between the educational sectors.

Efforts to maintain a routine are necessary because there is a direct connection between graduating secondary and upper education, and a skilled labor force. The Central Bureau of Statistics indicates that only 69.7% of all pupils graduated from secondary education in 2019. According to statistics published by the Education Ministry, the high-school graduation rate in the 2019–2020 school year stood at 73.4%, despite the challenges faced by the education system.

Citation:

Bllas, Nachum, 2021, "The Education System: An Overview," Taub Center, <https://www.taubcenter.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Education-Overview-ENG-2021.pdf>

OECD (2021), Education at a Glance 2021: OECD Indicators, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en>.

Central Bureau of Statistics. 2019. The face of Israeli society – gaps between the center and the periphery. Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics.

Dvir, Noam. 2020. Eligibility for matriculation: Who leads and who is at the bottom? Retrieved from Israel Today: <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/article/794271>

HFC. 2020. Procedures and guidelines for conducting and distance learning in an emergency. Retrieved from HFC: https://meyda.education.gov.il/files/lmida_herum/nohal_cherum_zman_emet_01012020.pdf

Ilan, Shahar. 2020. A third of parents do not have enough computers for distance learning. Retrieved from Calcalist: <https://www.calcalist.co.il/local/articles/0,7340,L-3851113,00.html>

Ministry of Education. 2020. Detailed circular on matriculation in the Corona outline. September: Ministry of Education, State of Israel. Retrieved from https://meyda.education.gov.il/files/Bitachon/exams_outline_2021.pdf

State Comptroller. 2020. A special interim report on the State of Israel's dealing with the corona crisis. Jerusalem: Israel.

The Knesset. 2020. Availability of end means and internet connection for children For distance learning. Jerusalem: The Knesset.

The Knesset. 2020. Emergency distance learning while closing educational institutions Following the outbreak of the coronavirus. Retrieved from Knesset Information and Research Center: https://fs.knesset.gov.il/globaldocs/MMM/6c81656c-de69-ea11-8113-00155d0af32a/2_6c81656c-de69-ea11-8113-00155d0af32a_11_13773.pdf

The Knesset. 2020. Preparing for the start of the next school year (2021/2020) during the Corona epidemic In Israel and in selected countries. Jerusalem: The Knesset.

Davar. 2020. Tightening the lockdown: Schools and gardens closed, no flight allowed, Retrieved from <https://www.davar1.co.il/273300/>

Kadri-Ovadia, Shira. 2020. 'Need to be more focused and interesting': Schools are trying to get used to distance learning, Haaretz, Retrieved from <https://www.haaretz.co.il/health/corona/.premium-1.8678786>

Kadri-Ovadia, Shira. 2021 "The Ministry of Education distributed 125,000 computers to students who do not have a computer in their home." Haaretz, Retrieved from <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/education/.premium-1.9444439>

Odem, Yahel. 2020. Distance learning will be reduced, school days will be returned during the great freedom, Mako, Retrieved from https://www.mako.co.il/news-education/2020_q2/Article-358aaabc32f8171026.htm

Shahar, Ilan. 2020. Knesset Research Center: "Distance Learning May Increase Dropout of At-Risk Students," Calcalist, Retrieved from <https://www.calcalist.co.il/local/articles/0,7340,L-3807625,00.html>

Social Inclusion

Social Inclusion
Policy
Score: 4

Israel still faces high inequality relative to other OECD countries. As of 2020, Israel ranked 10 out of 35 OECD countries on the basis of inequality as measured by the Gini coefficient. It also has the second-highest relative-income poverty rate within the OECD (16.9%). Additionally, Israel still has one of the lowest rates of spending on social issues among the OECD countries (16.1% of GDP compared to an OECD average of 21%, 2018).

The poverty rate among independent workers, mostly young workers, has increased almost 20% since the pandemic restrictions were introduced (Endebald et al., 2020). COVID-19 has also affected single-parent and low-income families, as the closure of schools and preschools led many parents to take unpaid leave in order to care for children (Toronto Foundation 2020), and parents had to meet the extra expenses to assist their children with online learning. This has affected their ability to purchase food and home supplies, increasing demand for economic support and food aid (Issac et al. 2020). Unfortunately, there is no specific government plan in place in Israel to address these additional needs and concerns (Kol Zchut 2020). The pandemic also affected those who are chronically ill or those who suffer from compromised immune systems, for whom there has been a lack of clear and sufficient guidelines. It was estimated that hundreds of thousands of workers refrained from returning to work (Beit Or 2020).

When examining the migrant community in Israel, we should look at migrants, refugees and foreign workers. According to the Israeli parliament, these groups are considered vulnerable populations, lacking money and accesses to health services and insurance. Israel has extended and renewed visas to foreign workers during the pandemic and provides crucial information regarding COVID-19 to foreign populations in their native language. However, it seems that Israel has not created a guarantee of income for foreigners, in contrast to other states in which foreigners have received economic funding from the government during the outbreak (Cohen 2020).

Citation:

Endebald, Miri, Oren Heller & Lahav Karadi. 2020. "Estimate of the impact of the Corona crisis on the socioeconomic situation," Israel's Social Security Institute, Retrieved from https://www.btl.gov.il/benefits/Unemployment/covid19_avt/Pages/default.aspx

Isaac, Irit, Dana Brander, Zohar Sharvit, Shaked Lubezki-Geta, Amelia Kaepernov & Dori Rivkin. 2020. "Dealing with the effects of the Corona crisis on people living in poverty" Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute, Retrieved from <https://brookdale.jdc.org.il/publication/corona-and-poverty/>

Kol Zchut, 2020. "Which grants are eligible during Covid-19?," Retrieved from <https://blog.kolzchut.org.il/?p=2643>

Toronto Foundation. 2020. "Grant for assistance to single-parent families who cannot work – during the Corona crisis," Retrieved from <https://ff-yt.org/%D7%A0%D7%99%D7%99%D7%A8-%D7%A2%D7%9E%D7%93%D7%94-%D7%9E%D7%A2%D7%A0%D7%A7-%D7%A1%D7%99%D7%95%D7%A2-%D7%9C%D7%97%D7%93-%D7%94%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%95%D7%AA-%D7%A9%D7%90%D7%99%D7%A0%D7%9F-%D7%99%D7%9B/>

Yasur Beit Or, Meital, 2020, "The Corona routine': The chronic patients were left behind," Israel Hayom, Retrieved from <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/article/758007>

Yechimovich Cohen, Nurit. 2020. "Coping with the spread of a virus The Corona among foreign populations: a comparative view" Knesset Research Center, Retrieved from <https://m.knesset.gov.il/activity/info/mmm/pages/document.aspx?docid=df7212b4-d182-ea11-8113-00155d0af32a&businessstype=1¹¹_{SEP}>

Health

Health Policy
Score: 8

Generally, the healthcare system in Israel is characterized by a publicly funded universal provision of services. At the same time, there remain significant gaps in between the quality of health services in the center and the periphery, and household out-of-pocket healthcare spending is relatively high due to partial privatization.

All residents in the country are eligible for medical insurance, which covers primary and secondary care, hospital services, and highly subsidized medications and medical technologies. A further layer of medical insurance is available for additional payments to one of the four non-commercial HMOS (health management organizations) that provide medical services in Israel.

The Israeli healthcare system's ability to cope, adapt and respond to COVID-19 and any other big-scale pandemic came under scrutiny during the initial COVID-19 outbreak. According to the State Comptroller (2020), Israel lacked a proper supply of medicines, vaccines and hospitalization solutions (e.g., hospital beds, vacancy in emergency rooms and ventilators), and stated that Israel was not prepared to handle large-scale outbreaks.

The State Comptroller also mentioned that the Ministry of Health (MOH) lacked an efficient system to monitor and track the spread of the coronavirus,

and faced issues with the documentation of the epidemiological examinations (State Comptroller 2020; Druckman 2020). To fill this void, the Israeli military became highly involved in managing and executing policies, such as tracking the spread of the virus, throughout the crisis (Zeitun 2020).

To meet the growing need for facilities to treat COVID-19 patients, most hospitals opened designated coronavirus wards that take care of critically ill patients. Other designated facilities included so-called COVID-19 hotels, which were used to accommodate people in isolation and were overseen by the Israeli military (Clalit 2020). The government also formed a specialized unit dedicated to protecting elderly citizens in nursing homes (Ministry of Health 2020).

During the outbreak, Israel decided that all medical services related to COVID-19 would be provided free to illegal foreigners, despite most not having medical insurance. Other services such as housing, and places for isolation and treatment were offered by various local authorities to low-income migrants.

In terms of medical staff, in April 2020, the MOH called for an increase in the number of doctors in hospitals that handle COVID-19 patients by roughly 300. By August 2020, only 156 out of these 300 positions had been filled (Knesset 2020). The government allocated about ILS 14.5 billion (approximately 3% of the yearly budget) to handling the health-related costs of the pandemic, including the costs of additional ventilators and protective gear for the medical staff, and the procurement of medicine and ambulatory services.

Although the government allocated funds to combat the spread of the disease, a gap persists in investment in health services between the different regions of the country. This influences the medical treatment given to infected patients. On some occasions, patients were transferred from hospitals in the periphery to hospitals in the center of the country due to the inability of peripheral hospitals to appropriately treat patients with COVID-19 (Ron 2020).

Citation:

Ministry of Finance, 2021. "2021-2022 state budget and economical plan pass first reading in Knesset plenum" Retrieved from: https://www.gov.il/en/departments/news/press_02092021_c

Ashkenazi, Shani. 2020. "26% of the country's Corona budget went to ventilators, which are hardly required now," Globes, Retrieved from <https://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1001345964>

Blank, Roni. 2020. "Addition of physician standards due to the Corona crisis – preliminary information" Knesset Research Center, Retrieved from <https://main.knesset.gov.il/Activity/Info/MMM/Pages/document.aspx?docId=4646c8d4-2fc0-ea11-8107-00155d0aee38&businessType=1>

Druckman, Yaron. 2020. "State Comptroller: The array of epidemiological investigations was not conducted

effectively, days until test results were obtained,” Retrieved from <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rJzIPx4uD>

Ministry of Health. 2020. Ministry of Health: During the Months of July and August, 53 Coronavirus Deaths were not Reported as part of Project Magen Avot VeImahot, Retrieved from https://www.gov.il/en/departments/news/19082020_02

Ron, Yael. 2020. The Corona exposes the gaps in Israeli society, Globes, Retrieved from <https://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1001346402>

The State Comptroller. 2020. “A special report on The Health System way of handling erupting and renewable diseases,” Retrieved from <https://www.mevaker.gov.il/sites/DigitalLibrary/Documents/2020/70a/200-health.pdf?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>

Yaron, Shlomit & Alon Laufer. 2020. “Hospitalization at home and hotel for verified Corona patients,” Clalit, Retrieved from https://www.clalit.co.il/he/info/services/Pages/inpatient_care_corona.aspx

Zeitun, Yoav. 2020. “IDF: 300 soldiers will be recruited for epidemiological investigations; Fighters will leave every 21 days,” Calcalist, Retrieved from <https://www.calcalist.co.il/local/articles/0,7340,L-3837954,00.html>

Families

Family Policy
Score: 7

Israel has a mixed family policy that is pro-family while also supporting the integration of mothers into the labor force. The total number of weeks of maternity leave in Israel is similar to the average across the OECD. However, other OECD countries offer more flexibility in terms of using parental-leave benefits or returning to work on a part-time basis.

The need for further subsidies for daycare and after-school activities has gained prominence as a middle-class issue, and a plan to subsidize care for children up to the age of five was announced. Compulsory education has been expanded, introducing free education for children aged three to four. However, reports claim that this program is still largely underfunded, and does not offer sustainable relief for working mothers and young families.

Women currently make up 47% of employees. A 2016 study indicates that becoming a mother has almost no effect on the employment rate of women aged between 25 and 44, especially for highly educated women. This positive trend is more prevalent among working Jewish women, whose employment rate nearly equals that of Jewish men. In line with government policies, there has been a gradual increase in workforce participation among Arab and ultra-Orthodox Jewish women, although they still lag behind.

Wage gaps between men and women remain. Since many women work part-time or hold temporary jobs in order to sustain their traditional role as the main household caregivers, their average monthly wage is lower than the average

for men. The gender gap is smaller but still significant for hourly wages, with women earning an average hourly rate of 15.8% lower than that of men. The wage gap is mainly driven by the position and scope of women's jobs, and differences in occupation, with a much smaller proportion of the gap attributable to direct discrimination (Taub Center 2017).

During the initial stages of the pandemic outbreak, women were more likely to lose their jobs than men (Kidar & Yarden 2020). In addition, about 7% of all working mothers did not return to work after the first lockdown (Ilan 2020). A decrease in earnings for women has also become apparent during the crisis (Rosenberg & Demeri, 2020).

Regarding emergency childcare for families, it seems that initiatives in municipalities and local authorities made use of already existing programs to support those in need, such as programs to support families in low-income neighborhoods in Israel (e.g., after-school activities and teaching). These programs are generally run in the neighborhood, and can be used to provide childcare and activities for children to do, instead of the child staying at home while parents work (Almog-Zaken & Sorek 2020)

Citation:

Central Bureau of Statistics, "Labour Force Survey Data, August 2017" http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader/newhodaot/hodaa_template_eng.html?hodaa=201720283

Karcher-Tzameret, H., Herzog, H., Hazan, N. "The gender index," Shavot – the center for women advancement in the public sphere 2016 (Hebrew). <http://genderindex.vanleer.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/%D7%A2%D7%99%D7%A7%D7%A8%D7%99-%D7%94%D7%9E%D7%9E%D7%A6%D7%90%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%9E%D7%93%D7%93-%D7%94%D7%9E%D7%92%D7%93%D7%A8-2016.pdf>

"Life-work balance: regulation 2/2017," Civil Service Commission (Hebrew): <http://www.csc.gov.il/DataBases/Hozrim/Pages/2-2017.aspx>

Mizrachi-Simon, S. "Employment within Arab Woman in Israel," Knesset Research and Information Center, 31.7.2016: <https://www.knesset.gov.il/mmm/data/pdf/m03804.pdf>

Swirsky, S., E. Konor-Atias, "Social status report 2016," January 2017 (Hebrew): <http://adva.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/SocialReport2016.pdf>

Taub Center Staff, "Work-life balance: parental leave policies in Israel" Taub Center Bulletin Articles, 27.7.2016, <http://taubcenter.org.il/work-life-balance-parental-leave-policies-in-israel/>

Taub Center Staff, "Division of Labor: Wage Gaps between Women and Men in Israel" Taub Center Policy Research, 01.03.2017: <http://taubcenter.org.il/division-of-labor-wage-gaps-between-women-and-men-in-israel/>,

"The tax benefits for parents at Net Family will become permanent," Ynet, 22.2.18 (Hebrew): <https://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-5126144,00.html>

Udasin, S & Hoffman, G. "Kahlon Announces Sweeping Tax Cut Program for Working Families," The Jerusalem Post, 18.4.2017: <http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/Kahlon-announces->

sweeping-tax-cut-program-for-working-families-488250

Almog-Zaken, Aya & Yue Sorek. 2020, "Community Solutions for Individuals and Families in disadvantaged neighborhoods in Israel During the Corona Epidemic," Brookdale Institute, Retrieved from <https://brookdale.jdc.org.il/publication/better-together-program-corona/>

Ilan, Shahar. 2020. "66% of the unemployed in the second wave are women – and there is still no targeted assistance," Calcalist, Retrieved from <https://www.calcalist.co.il/local/articles/0,7340,L-3851779,00.html>

Ilan, Shahar, 2020. "Employment Service: 70% of unemployed persons returning in the second closure – women" Calcalist, Retrieved from <https://www.calcalist.co.il/local/articles/0,7340,L-3851245,00.html>

Keidar, Yarden. 2020. Impact of the Corona Crisis: Women – Men, The Israel Democracy Institute, Retrieved from <https://www.idi.org.il/blogs/special-economic-survey/march-april-2020/31818>

Kol Zchut. 2020. "Which grants are eligible during Covid-19?," Retrieved from <https://blog.kolzchut.org.il/?p=2643>

Ministry of Labor. 2020. "Emergency regulations regarding employees and employees, protected by the Women's Labor Law, have been repealed," <https://www.gov.il/he/departments/news/cancellation-emergency-regulations>

Rosenberg, Mark and Noam Demeri. 2020. "Characteristics of employees whose wages have been reduced due to the Coronavirus," National Insurance Institute, Retrieved from https://www.btl.gov.il/Publications/more_publications/Documents/meafyenei_ovdim.pdf

Rosenberg, Mark, Noam Demery, Kobe Cohen & Raffaele Cohen. 2020. "Labor Market Characteristics in the First Half of 2020," National Insurance Institute, Retrieved from https://www.btl.gov.il/Publications/more_publications/Documents/meafyenei_shuk.pdf

Pensions

Pension Policy
Score: 7

The Israeli pension system is mainly based nowadays on defined-benefits pension plans, with most contributions invested in the capital market and some 30% in government bonds. The main risk under that system is carried by individuals. Since 2008, every salaried employee has to have a pension plan, of which two-thirds is financed by the employer. Meanwhile, every self-employed worker has had to have a pension plan since 2017. This is meant to secure the future of Israel's moderately aging population. However, mandatory pension saving reduces available income for poor households and does not supply the supplementary income that is critical for the extremely poor.

Israel's pension system is based on competition between pension funds, which is supposed to lower management fees. In addition, the Ministry of Finance defined "default" pension funds committed to charging lower management.

In 2021, the Israeli parliament approved a bill to raise the retirement age for women in Israel. The retirement age for women will rise from 62 to 65, over a period of 11 years. The retirement age for men is currently 67.

Citation:

Avitan Cohen, Shirit, "Finance Committee approves bill to raise women's retirement age," 21.10.2021 <https://en.globes.co.il/en/article-finance-cttee-approves-bill-to-raise-womens-retirement-age-1001388263>

“Israel ranks fourth in the OECD in the poverty rate of the elderly,” the marker 20.2.18 (Hebrew): <https://www.themarker.com/career/1.5829515>

JPOST, “Pension Reform,” The Jerusalem Post, 8.2.2016, <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Pension-reform-463059>

“Kahlon unveils pension plan for self-employed Israel,” Globes, 21.4.2016, <http://www.globes.co.il/en/article-kahlon-unveils-pension-plan-for-self-employed-israelis-1001119587>

Swirsky, S., E. Konor-Atias, “Social status report 2016,” January 2017. (Hebrew) <http://adva.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/SocialReport2016.pdf>

Zarhia, Zvi, “The Work and Welfare Committee Approved: Pension Savings for all Self-Employed,” 07.02.2016 <https://www.themarker.com/news/1.3146099>

Integration

Integration Policy
Score: 5

In Israel, we need to distinguish between two general types of immigration: immigration of non-Israeli Jews, which is legally recognized and encouraged, not least through financial and other support for immigrants; and immigration of non-Jews, who migrate as refugees or as illegal immigrants, for which no coherent framework exists. Though there is a continuous presence of migrant workers in sectors such as agriculture, construction and elderly care, workers are defined as temporary. In addition, in recent years, Israel has tried in various debatable ways to deport illegal immigrants, particularly migrants from African countries.

Legal immigrants have full access to the labor market and the education system. In addition, they are eligible for free-of-charge preparatory courses in various professional domains and general orientation for the Israeli labor market. Adults and children are also eligible for dedicated Hebrew language courses. However, illegal immigrants have restricted and non-inclusive access to the labor market. Access to the education system depends upon local authorities' policies. Due to their illegal status, they are officially eligible only to receive emergency medical services, and other medical services are provided by humanitarian and medical NGOs or private doctors.

Citation:

Aid to financing immigrant wages, The Israeli Government Website, 2019 (Hebrew) https://www.gov.il/he/departments/general/participation_in_salary

Immigration funding support, The Israeli Government, 2019 (Hebrew): https://www.gov.il/he/departments/general/absorption_basket

Times of Israel, “Israel freezes deportations of asylum-seekers after a court challenge,” 15.03.2018: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-freezes-deportations-of-asylum-seekers-after-court-challenge/>

Bar-On, Guy, “The Only Country that Fines Refugees,” The Marker, 24.9.2017, <https://www.themarker.com/opinion/1.4461484>

Dressler, Tamar, "Going in and out: the broken dreams of the new Tzabars," *Maariv*, 13/02/2018 (Hebrew): <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/israel/Article-623907>

"Enlarged assistance to native Ethiopians," The Ministry of Construction and Housing website (Hebrew)

"Foreigners who cannot be deported from Israel," State comptroller, 2014 (Hebrew): http://www.mevaker.gov.il/he/Reports/Report_248/af07752c-7845-4f1d-ae97-23c45c702624/102-ver-5.pdf

Leshem, Elazar, "The Reform in the Absorption Policy" 16.8.2007, http://taubcenter.org.il/wp-content/files_mf/h2007_immigrant_integration32.pdf

Lior, Ilan, "Israel Jails Hundreds of African Asylum-Seekers Without Trial Every Year," *Haaretz* 24.9.2017, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.813781>

"Towards deportation of "Illegals": how many were approved asylum from the third world?," "the day that was" department, *Nana10 news*, 04/01/2018 (Hebrew): <http://10tv.nana10.co.il/Article/?ArticleID=1279742>

Rosenberg, David, "Israel prepares to deport African infiltrators, issues warnings," 04.02.2018, <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/241542>

Kershner, Isabel, "Israel Moves to Expel Africans. Critics Say That's Not Jewish", 02.02.2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/02/world/middleeast/israel-migrants-african.html>

Safe Living

Internal Security
Policy
Score: 6

The Ministry of Public Security (MPS) is the main body that manages the internal security policy, including crime prevention, prisons, gun control and fire prevention policies. Counterterrorism is mainly handled by the Shin Bet. The Israel National Cyber Directorate is responsible for cybercrime security.

Notwithstanding occasional acts of terrorism, Israelis still report that they feel generally secure. According to the most recent crime-victimization survey, 70% of people claim that they feel safe walking alone at night. Israel's homicide rate (a more accurate indicator of safety in a country) is 1.8 per 100,000 inhabitants in contrast to 3.8 on average in OECD countries.

Nevertheless, this seems to hold mainly for Jewish municipalities. Arab communities suffer extensive crime and violence. Arab citizens make up about a fifth of the Israeli population, but are involved in 93% of shooting incidents, 64% of murders, 61% of arson incidents, 56% of weapons offenses and 47% of robberies. The year 2021 was characterized by a major effort by decision-makers and other stakeholders to raise awareness and implement concrete measures to tackle the "violence epidemic." Major funds have been allocated for policing, welfare and the educational needs of the Arab-Israeli population.

Citation:

Elran, Meir, Lavie, Ephraim, Itzhali, Meni and Wattad, Mohammed S. (2021). "Curbing Violence and Crime in the Arab Sector in Israel: Policy Recommendations." *The Institute for National Security Studies*

<https://www.inss.org.il/publication/violence-arab-sector-in-israel/>

“A View on MPS 2016,” <http://mops.gov.il/Documents/Publications/HofeshHamaida/summeryreport2016.pdf>

Grassini, E., Between security and military identities: The case of Israeli security experts, *Security Dialogue*, 49(2018)1-2, 83-95: <https://pure.uva.nl/ws/files/22149964/0967010617747202.pdf>

Israel’s Crime Victimization Survey 2015, CBS, http://www.cbs.gov.il/publications16/1653_bitachon_ishy_2015/pdf/intro_e.pdf

Kubovich, Y., “98% of sexual harassment victims in Israel don’t complain to police according to Gov’t poll,” 5.5.2015, Haaretz: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.654825>

“National violence index 2014,” the Ministry of Public Security publication February 2014 (Hebrew).

“Safety: Better life index Israel,” OECD. <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/topics/safety/>

State Comptroller: “Police do not reduce the gap between the number of crime cases and indictments in the Arab sector, Calcalist, 15.8.18 (Hebrew): <https://www.calcalist.co.il/local/articles/0,7340,L-3744371,00.html>

Ziv, Amitai, “Instead of cyber protection we got a 200 million NIS “puppet of the Shabak,” *The Marker*, 29.08.2018 (Hebrew): <https://www.themarker.com/technation/.premium-1.6429216>

Hermann, Tamar et al., A Conditional Partnership. Jews and Arabs. Israel 2017, Israel Democracy Institute, Jerusalem 2017, <https://en.idi.org.il/media/11172/jews-and-arabs.pdf>

Abu Ras, Thabet, and Be’eri Sulitzeanu, Amnon, Roots of Crime Wave in Arab Cities of Israel, Abraham Initiatives, 15.10.2019, <https://abrahaminitiatives.org/roots-of-crime-wave-in-arab-cities-of-israel/>

Global Inequalities

Global Social
Policy
Score: 5

Israeli policy regarding global inequalities mainly consists of offering assistance in humanitarian, medical and financial aid to developing countries during emergencies. In recent decades, this aid has been expanded to technological and agricultural knowledge-sharing. The government’s Center for International Cooperation (MASHAV) oversees cooperation with other developed countries and is responsible for launching emergency-assistance missions.

Although Israel has signed a number of international cooperation agreements with parties such as the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, it is not considered to be a leader or an agenda-setter with regard to global fair-trade policies. However, it is improving its regulatory structure to reflect international trade agreements and WTO standards.

In January 2019, Israel established a fund that aims to support environmental projects in developing countries. The fund is the responsibility of the Ministry of Environmental Protection, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Economy,

with the help of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

The World Health Organization (WHO) defined COVID-19 as a pandemic that requires global attention and cooperation among nations. Israel complied with the WHO request and worked together with the international community to assist developing countries, to manufacture and spread better medical equipment and technology, and to develop a vaccine as fast as possible. Between March and July 2020, Israel's government sent equipment, medical assistance and experts to 16 countries to assist in their fight against the pandemic.

Israeli support for the Palestinian Authority (PA) was moderate at best. Israel delivered coronavirus testing kits to the PA and worked together with Palestinian medical experts to prevent the spread of the virus in the PA's territory. Israel also helped the PA in coordinating the entry of over 50,000 masks and 3,000 testing kits donated by the WHO.

In addition, Israel sent a research delegation to India to work on several missions, including the development of new and rapid coronavirus tests, treatment of Indian patients, and the development of new technologies to improve the treatment of coronavirus patients. Besides its assistance to other countries, the Israeli government had cooperated with the international community to develop a vaccine for COVID-19. The Israeli government joined COVAX, an international facility that aims to pull the cost and benefits of finding, producing and distributing an effective vaccine, and fully committed to the global combined effort to develop a vaccine. By placing costs and reward consideration aside, COVAX made it possible for Israel to receive frozen SARS-COV-2 samples from Japan, Italy and Switzerland for study at the Israel Institute for Biological Research. Israel also participated in the combined global effort to develop a vaccine, improve treatment, and manufacture diagnostic kits, pledging \$60 million in an international conference that aimed to raise up to \$8 billion.

Citation:

"Environmental, Finance, and Economy Ministries set up a fund to support environmental projects in developing countries" Ministry of Environment, 16.1.2019 (Hebrew)

http://www.sviva.gov.il/InfoServices/NewsAndEvents/MessageDoverAndNews/Pages/2019/01-Jan/new_fund_supporting_environmental_projects_developing_countries.aspx

Hayut, Ilanit, "Israeli gov't expands meat imports to spur competition" Globes, 24.03.2016, <http://www.globes.co.il/en/article-israeli-govt-expands-meat-imports-to-spur-competition-1001112370>

"Israel and World Bank Group sign agreement to share innovative best practices in water," The World Bank website 17.6.2015: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2015/06/17/israel-world-bank-group-agreement-innovative-best-practices-water>

“Israel shares cybersecurity expertise with World Bank client countries,” The World Bank Website, 22.6.2016: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2016/06/22/israel-shares-cybersecurity-expertise-with-world-bank-client-countries>

Reuters. 2020. Brazil to Join COVAX Vaccine Facility, as Chile, Israel, UEA also Sign Up, retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-brazil-int-idUSKCN26G169>

Harkov, Lahav. 2020. Coronavirus complicates Israeli research and aid delegation to India, The Jerusalem Post, retrieved from <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/coronavirus-complicates-israeli-research-and-aid-delegation-to-india-63630>

Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2020. Israel worldwide fight against covid-19, retrieved from <https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/IsraelExperience/VideoLibrary/Pages/Israel-s-worldwide-fight-against-COVID-19-30-July-2020.aspx>

NOCAMLES. 2020. Israel pledges 60\$ million towards global efforts for covid-19 vaccine, diagnostics, R&D, retrieved from <https://nocamels.com/2020/05/israel-60m-global-efforts-for-covid19-vaccine-diagnostics/>

Jeffery, Nathan. 2020. Their best shot: Israeli efforts to invent a coronavirus vaccine, explained, the times of Israel, retrieved from <https://www.timesofisrael.com/their-best-shots-israeli-efforts-to-invent-a-coronavirus-vaccine-explained/>

Ron, Omri. 2020. Israel sends 200 coronavirus test kits to Gaza strip, The Jerusalem Post, retrieved from <https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Israel-sends-200-coronavirus-test-kits-to-Gaza-strip-620883>

III. Environmental Policies

Environment

Environmental
Policy
Score: 6

Israel faces significant environmental challenges due to its small territory, high population growth, and poor natural water resources. Its geopolitical climate adds another challenge since unlike many OECD countries, Israel’s relationship with its neighboring countries prevents it from sharing power facilities and thereby reducing environmental costs. Security and political considerations also overshadow environmental issues, resulting in long-term neglect of environmental policy even as OECD accession has bound Israel to conform with Western standards and goals.

Although Israel’s environmental policy still lags behind other OECD countries, it has made some advances in recent years, including the ratification of the Paris agreement and a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Although most of its power production is based on fossil fuels (moving from coal to natural gas), some power production is based on solar and wind power. Taxation encourages the purchase of less polluting vehicles, but at the same time public transportation is underdeveloped.

Recently, Israel launched the Israel 2030 Energy Goals, which includes various paths to increase the country's use of natural gas and renewable energy sources. According to this new initiative, Israel plans to stop using coal as an energy source by 2030, and replace coal with natural gas and other less-polluting sources of energy (e.g., solar energy). These plans were criticized by the Ministry of Finance as well as the oil and gas industry, while environmentalists criticized the plan for being too mild. In addition, it remains to be seen whether and to what degree these goals will be achieved. The government has declared that the transition to green energy is one of the pillars of its working plan for 2022. To encourage a clean energy transition toward the use of green and efficient electricity, and electric transportation, and to boost investment in infrastructure, the Ministry of Finance is promoting legislative amendments such as regulatory relief and the elimination of barriers to promote green energy. In addition, the government updated the national target for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, so that they will be reduced by at least 27% by 2030 and by at least 85% by 2050 (from the annual amount of 79 million tons, measured in 2015).

Israel's National Biodiversity Protection Plan was prepared by Israel's Ministry of Environmental Protection, and the Nature and Parks Authority, and was adopted in 2010. Since then, it serves as the national guiding document in this area. Regarding environmental pollution, in September 2015, the Israeli government adopted a national multi-year plan to limit air pollution and mitigate environmental risks in the Haifa Bay Area. The government took additional steps following the above decisions during 2021–2022, but environmental organizations claim that the process is too slow and the measures taken are insufficient.

Government Decision 171/2021 "Transition to a Low Carbon Economy" amending Decision 542/2015. <https://climate-laws.org/geographies/israel/policies/government-decision-171-2021-transition-to-a-low-carbon-economy-amending-decision-542-2015>

Ben-David, Amir. Delay in Ashalim acid spill probe could result in lenient punishment, 12.8.2017, Ynet, Retrieved from <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-5001938,00.html>

"Govt. OKs Program to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Increase Energy Efficiency," Israel Ministry of Environmental Protection, online website, 10.04.2016, <http://www.sviva.gov.il/English/ResourcesandServices/NewsAndEvents/NewsAndMessageDover/Pages/2016/04-April/Govt-OKs-Program-to-Reduce-Greenhouse-Gas-Emissions,-Increase-Energy-Efficiency.aspx>

"Israel's 2030 Energy Goals Come Under Fire From Interest Groups, Environmentalists" Haaretz, 11.12.18 (Hebrew): <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-israel-s-2030-energy-goals-come-under-fire-from-interest-groups-environmentalists-1.6729528>

Israel Ministry of Environmental Protection: http://www.sviva.gov.il/English/env_topics/InternationalCooperation/OnTheIntlFront/Pages/OTIFdefault.aspx

Israel Ministry of Environmental Protection, "Israel Biennial Update Report," 15.5.2017
http://www.sviva.gov.il/english/env_topics/climatechange/mitigation/documents/israel-biennial-update-report-may-2017.pdf

Jpost.com Staff. Industrial waste water leaks from Israeli chemical plant, 30.6.2017, Jpost, Retrieved from:
<http://www.jpost.com/Business-and-Innovation/Environment/Industrial-waste-water-leaks-from-Israeli-chemical-plant-498433>

Koriel, Ilana. The biggest ecological disasters in Southern Israel (Hebrew), 8.7.2017, Ynet, Retrieved from
www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-4986127,00.html

OECD, "Israel's Green Tax on Cars," OECD Environment Policy Paper, July 2016,
http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/ocd/environment/israel-s-green-tax-on-cars_5jlv5rmnq9wg-en#.WdJ0SBOCy34#page5

Rinat, Zafir, Seidler Shirly and News Agencies, Oil Spill One of Worst Pollution Disasters in Israel's History, 4.12.2014, Haaretz, Retrieved from <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.629958>

Rousseau, Daphne. In Israeli desert, the world's highest solar tower looks to future, 19.6.2016, The Times of Israel. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-israeli-desert-worlds-highest-solar-tower-looks-to-future/>

"The state of nature 2015," HaMarag publication June 2015 (Hebrew): <https://bit.ly/3cIbiST>

Law Library of Congress: Regulation of Air Pollution: Israel, <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/air-pollution/israel.php>

The State Comptroller. 2020. "Promoting renewable energies and reducing dependence on fuels," Annual report 71A, retrieved from: <https://www.mevaker.gov.il/sites/DigitalLibrary/Pages/Reports/3831-4.aspx#section2>

Surkes Sue. 2020. "Cabinet greenlights target of 30% renewable energy by 2030," Times of Israel, retrieved from: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/cabinet-greenlights-target-of-30-renewable-energy-by-2030/>

Global Environmental Protection

Global
 Environmental
 Policy
 Score: 5

Israel is a relatively small participant in the international climate policy network and by no means a leader in global efforts to tackle environmental issues. In recent years, it has taken a larger role in environmental policy matters, partly due to a rise in public awareness of these issues, and partly due to its accession to international organizations and treaties. Israel has signed, ratified or acceded 20 environmental conventions, as well as several amendments and protocols to those conventions.

The country has been forced to develop technological and ecological solutions due to the unique and diverse nature of the Israeli climate, the country's scarcity of natural drinking water, and its hostile neighboring countries. The country has developed an industry of more than 400 companies dedicated exclusively to sustainable water, energy, and environmental technologies. It has launched green-technology projects aimed at demonstrating its achievements in the fields of desalination and water recycling, and actively

shares information and technologies with other countries. Israel is also involved in international anti-desertification efforts since it is an important exporter of new methods and technologies developed specifically for arid regions.

One of the main global events in the field of environmental protection was the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference, more commonly referred to as COP26, which was held in Glasgow. The Israeli delegation was one of the largest at the summit. Its main focus was on climate innovation, namely using existing and developing new high-tech advancements to combat climate change.

Citation:

“Bennett at COP26: Israel can be ‘climate innovation nation’.” I24NEWS. 01.11.2021. <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/1635785702-bennett-at-cop26-israel-can-be-climate-innovation-nation>

“Government OKs Decision to Implement Sustainable Development Indicators,” Ministry of Environmental Protection, 14.7.2019 (Hebrew):

https://www.gov.il/en/departments/news/government_approved_implementation_of_sdgs

“Israel and World Bank Group sign agreement to share innovative best practices in water,” The World Bank website 17.6.2015: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2015/06/17/israel-world-bank-group-agreement-innovative-best-practices-water>

Israel Ministry of Environment Protection:
http://www.sviva.gov.il/English/env_topics/InternationalCooperation/IntlConventions/Pages/default.aspx

OECD, “Israel’s Green Tax on Cars” OECD Environment Policy Paper, July 2016,
http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/ocd/environment/israel-s-green-tax-on-cars_5jlv5rmnq9wg-en#.WdJ0SBOCy34#page5

Robust Democracy

Electoral Processes

Candidacy
Procedures
Score: 8

Israel is an electoral democracy. While it does not have an official constitution, one of its basic laws (The Knesset: 1958), which holds special standing in the Israeli legal framework, constitutes a general, free, equal, discrete, direct and proportional elections, to be held every four years. This Basic Law promises an equal opportunity for each Israeli citizen to elect and to be elected under certain reasonable restraints, namely being a citizen over the age of 21, with no record of incarceration over a three-month period in the seven years prior to his/her nomination. Nominees who held a prominent public office (as specified in the written law) must wait a cooling period. More controversially, the Basic Law: The Knesset authorizes the Central Elections Committee to reject a nominee or a list if they reject Israel's Jewish and democratic identity, if they support another country or terrorist organization's armed conflict against Israel, or if they incite racism.

The Central Elections Committee is chaired by a High Court of Justice judge and is assembled by Knesset members according to the prevailing seat allocation in the Knesset. Therefore, it is mainly a political body. Nevertheless, any decision to disqualify a nominee must be authorized by the Supreme Court, which in many cases overrules the committee's decisions.

Citation:

"Basic Laws: 'The Knesset'" Knesset official website: www.knesset.gov.il/description/eng/eng-mimshal_yesod1.htm (English)

Fuchs, Amir. "MK Suspension Bill: Anti-Democratic to the Core," 06.06.2016, <https://en.idi.org.il/articles/2357>

Hezki, Baruch. "Bill to bar Supreme Court from deciding who can run for Knesset," 26.10.17, Arutz Sheva: <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/237241>

Norris, P., Wynter, T and Cameron, S. (2018). "Corruption and Coercion: The Year in Elections 2017," The Electoral Integrity Project, <https://www.electoralintegrityproject.com/the-year-in-elections-2017>

"Summary of laws relating to the general elections," from the Knesset official website (Hebrew)

Staff, ToI. "High Court Bars Far-right Party Leader Ben Ari From Running In Elections," 17.3.2019, The Times of Israel: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/high-court-bars-far-right-party-leader-ben-ari-from-elections/>

Media Access
Score: 8

One of the foundation stones of Israeli democracy is its free press and media. As part of this foundation, laws have been passed to ensure equal media access for all candidates and parties. Moreover, the criteria for allocating airtime during election campaigns is impartial: it is not subjected to any kind of arbitrary considerations or determined by the chairman of the Central Elections Committee.

While election broadcasting rights are fair and balanced, achieving equal media representation is a routine challenge. Most notably, minorities often remain under-represented. For example, Arab Israeli interviewees are under-represented in broadcasts by Hebrew media outlets. According to studies of civil society organizations, media coverage of Arab candidates and lists in Hebrew media was relatively low (4.5% and 7.5% of total coverage) during the two elections held in 2019.

In recent years, the number of Jewish-only public opinion surveys has decreased, following criticism waged by the Seventh Eye media watchdog and changes made to the Israel Press Council's ethical rules. While those surveys sometimes presented as representing the Israeli public opinion, the fact that they exclude Arab Israeli citizens is usually not mentioned.

Citation:

Hattis Rolef, Susan, Ben Meir, Liat and Zwebner, Sarah, "Party financing and election financing in Israel," Knesset Research Institute, 21.7.2003 (Hebrew).

Persiko, Oren, "An increase in the number of Arab speakers in election bulletin," The Seventh Eye, 26.9.2019 (Hebrew):

<https://www.the7eye.org.il/346075>

Persiko, Oren, "On the way down," The Seventh Eye, 20.8.2019 (Hebrew):

<https://www.the7eye.org.il/341556>

Persiko, Oren, "Mid-2019: 2.7% representation of Arab society, which constitutes about 20% of the population," The Seventh Eye, 17.7.2019 (Hebrew):

<https://www.the7eye.org.il/336325>

Persisko, Oren, "The right thing," The Seventh Eye, 1.11.2019 (Hebrew):

<https://www.the7eye.org.il/349660>

Shwartz-Altshuler and Lurie, Guy, "Redesign the Israeli Election Propaganda Arrangements", Israel democracy institute website 6.4.2015: <https://bit.ly/2ziXcKa> (Hebrew)

Stern, Itay. "Israeli-Arab Representation on TV Talk Shows Shot Up in 2016"(Hebrew), 02.02.2017, Haaretz: <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.769065>

Zarchia, Z. "The Constitution Committee has approved to introduce a bill suggesting to cancel the prohibit on election propaganda two months before elections" 11.07.18, Calcalist: <https://www.calcalist.co.il/local/articles/0,7340,L-3742130,00.html>

Voting and
Registration
Rights
Score: 9

In Israel, the right to vote is almost comprehensive, with very few restrictions.

According to the Israeli Basic Law: The Knesset (1958), every Israeli citizen aged 18 or over is eligible to vote in general elections. This right is guaranteed under the principle of equality. Thus, it is only restrained by the need to exhibit a valid government identification with the voter's name and picture. In addition, the Basic Law: The Knesset defines the day of the national elections as a national holiday, with public transportation and public services open, thus giving voters a positive (or, at least, not a negative) incentive to vote.

The right to vote in Israel applies also to prisoners. Handicapped citizens are entitled to special voting stations that are adequately equipped, thus simplifying their voting process by using double envelopes. Soldiers on active duty are entitled to vote in special voting stations using a double envelope. Although the mentally ill are usually unable to access voting stations (due to hospitalization or personal constraints), they are not restrained by any specific law.

There are informal restrictions on voting, which reduce the ability of citizens belonging to certain groups to actually exercise the right to vote. In contrast to some countries, Israel does not allow citizens that are out of the country (the territories excluded) at the time of the elections to vote unless they are members of a distinct status, eligible by law (e.g., embassy employees stationed abroad). However, every citizen has the right to vote without a minimum period of residency in the country.

Information regarding the voting procedure is available via special government-funded information centers, and be accessed through the media, online and by telephone. Problems and complaints are dealt through the Central Elections Committee, each branch assigned with different level complaints.

Citation:

Bander, Arik, "The Election Committee Suggests: Voters Could Vote in A Different Address Than Registered," Maariv Online, 22.6.2016, <http://www.maariv.co.il/news/politics/Article-546545>^[1]_{SEP}

"Basic Laws: The Knesset," Knesset official website: www.knesset.gov.il/description/eng/eng-mimshal_yesod1.htm

Blander, Dana, and Avital Friedman. "Who will not be able to vote on Election Day?," Israel Democracy Institute, 31.3.2019 (Hebrew): <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/26341>

The 19th election for the Knesset: Information for the voter Q&A," National election supervisor website (Hebrew)

"Who is allowed to vote?," Israel Democracy Institute website, November 2002 (Hebrew)^[1]_{SEP}

Central Election Committee: Elections for the 21. Knesset, 9. April 2019: <https://bechiro21.bechiro21.gov.il/election/Pages/HomePage.aspx> (Hebrew)

Party Financing
Score: 8

Israel has strict rules concerning party financing and electoral campaigns. The most important are the Parties Law (1992) and the Party Financing Law (1992), which require all parties to document their finances and report them to the State Comptroller. These laws set strict limits on party membership dues, and fundraising from members and supporters. In addition, the laws define how funds received from the state in accordance with the Political Parties (Financing) Law are allocated. Since 2018, the Parties Law also limits the amount of funding that candidates can raise when participating in intra-party elections.

All financial activities during elections are subjected to the supervision of the State Comptroller, who has on several occasions issued instructions that have the status of subsidiary legislation. The State Comptroller publishes regular reports regarding party finances and is in charge of ruling whether there has been a breach of the law regarding party financing and election financing. Moreover, it is the State Comptroller who can also rule that a party group must return funds to the state because of breaches in the receipt of non-public contributions.

Party funding regulation has been politicized in recent years. Since 2018, an amendment to the party financing law limits the funding that joint parties receive from the state budget so that a joint list of three or four parties would be given the funding of only two parties. In practice, this applies only to the Joint List of four Arab parties and it has been argued that the law was directly intended to break up the Joint List. A year before, another amendment of the party financing law, aimed at limiting the activities of various non-party-political bodies that seek to influence the outcome of elections in Israel. It requires these bodies to report their funding sources to the State Comptroller. The amendment was named “V15 bill” after V15, an organization that was funded by organizations from the United States and Europe, and which funded efforts during the 2015 election campaign against the Likud party and Prime Minister Netanyahu.

Citation:

Amendment to the Party Financing Law, 2018: https://fs.knesset.gov.il//20/law/20_Is2_501466.pdf
Hattis Rolef, Susan, Ben Meir, Liat and Zwebner, Sarah, “Party financing and elections financing in Israel, Knesset Research Institute, 21.7.2003 (Hebrew).

Klein, Z. “The State Comptroller: A fine to The Likus and the Bayit Yehudi,” Israel Hayom: 15.10.2018: <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/article/599301>

“Knesset passes controversial ‘transparency’ law on NGO funding,” Jewish Telegraph Agency, 12.07.2016: <http://www.jta.org/2016/07/12/news-opinion/israel-middle-east/knesset-passes-controversial-transparency-law-on-ngo-funding>

Levinson, H. and Lis, Y. “Netanyahu: the NGO Legislation is too weak, We Shall forbid Foreign Funding of

Organizations, Haaretz, 11.6.2017, <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politi/1.4161298>

Shapira, Asaf. "This is how elections are funded in Israel," Israel Democracy Institute, 19.7.2019 (Hebrew): <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/25939>

The State Comptroller. "The functions and powers of the State Comptroller": <https://www.mevaker.gov.il/En/About/Pages/MevakerTafkid.aspx>

Popular Decision-Making
Score: 2

Israel's government and parliament have traditionally given little support to popular decision-making mechanisms. However, in March 2014 the Knesset approved Basic Law: Referendum. This law will apply in the event of an agreement or unilateral decision that involves withdrawal from certain geographical areas. The law has never been applied and the use of referendums is limited to this particular issue.

Attempts at encouraging popular decision-making mechanisms tend to take the form either of (1) open information projects or websites addressing national interest investigation committees, or (2) special legal provisions allowing citizens to appeal against decisions on certain issues (e.g., urban planning) or addressing parliament committees on issues that directly concern them. These sorts of initiatives, while important, align with a top-down strategy for civil participation instead of encouraging independent initiatives.

These initiatives, however, remained largely in early stages, and we were unable to find any meaningful ways through which Israeli citizens can affect the decision process directly (that is: without media pressure, persuasion via lobbying firms or appeal to the courts).

Citation:

Altshuler-Shwartz, Tehila, "Open government policy in Israel in the digital age," Israel democracy institute, 2012. (Hebrew)

"Future recommendations," sharing: committee for social and economical transformation website. (Hebrew)

Gefen, Haaron, "The effect of institutionalizing participatory democracy on the level of sharing by public organization employees," Israel Democracy Institute, 2011 (Hebrew)

Karmon, Yoav "Re-inventing Israel's Democracy," Vaksman, Efrat and Blander, Dana, "Models for sharing," Israel Democracy Institute website 2012 (Hebrew)

"Sharing on governmental issues," Israeli government website (Hebrew)

Access to Information

Media Freedom
Score: 7

Israel's media environment is considered lively and pluralistic, and the media is able to criticize the government. Even though the country's basic laws do not offer direct protection and censorship, agreements accord the military wide

discretion over issues of national security, legal protections for the press are robust: The Supreme Court has ruled that freedom of expression is an essential component of human dignity and has continuously defended it, soundly assimilating this principle in the Israeli political culture.

However, in recent years, Israeli media has been downgraded to partially free by Freedom House. Furthermore, the 2019 Reporters without Borders report stated that Israeli media is free but constrained by military censorship, with Israel ranked 88 out of 180 countries. When examining the extent to which the media in Israel is independent, one should also notice the immense power for censorship that the law facilitates. Under a 1996 Censorship Agreement between the media and the military, the censor has the power – on the grounds of national security – to penalize, shut down or stop the printing of a newspaper, or to confiscate its printing machines. In practice, however, the censor's role is quite limited, and journalists often evade restrictions by leaking a story to a foreign outlet and then republishing.

Citation:

Albin, Einat, Ittai Bar-Siman-Tov, Aeyal Gross & Tamar Hostovsky-Brandes. (2021). Israel Report, LAC19 Compendium, Lex-Atlas: Covid-19. Retrieved from: <https://lexatlas-c19.org>.

Freedom House: Israel. 2020. Civil liberties. Retrieved from: <https://freedomhouse.org/country/israel/freedom-world/2020>

Israeli's Prime Minister Office. 2020. Prime Minister Netanyahu's press briefing after consulting on the coronavirus subject. Retrieved from: https://www.gov.il/he/departments/news/spoke_corona150320

Itonaim Website. 2020. Journalist union court appeal accepted: The Supreme Court exempted journalists from shin-bet tracing. Retrieved from: <https://www.itonaim.org.il/%D7%91%D7%92%D7%A5-%D7%A7%D7%99%D7%91%D7%9C-%D7%90%D7%AA-%D7%A2%D7%AA%D7%99%D7%A8%D7%AA-%D7%90%D7%A8%D7%92%D7%95%D7%9F-%D7%94%D7%A2%D7%99%D7%AA%D7%95%D7%A0%D7%90%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%95%D7%94%D7%92%D7%91/>

Man, Elad and Tehila Shwartz-Altshuler. 2020. "Journalistic work out to be exempt from emergency regulations" the Israeli Democracy Institution. Retrieved from <https://www.idi.org.il/parliaments/30997/31079>

Persico, Oren. 2020. "State rejects supreme court proposal to exempt journalists from shin-bet corona tracing." The Seventh Eye. Retrieved from <https://www.the7eye.org.il/369853>

Persico, Oren. 2020. "The pressure worked." The Seventh Eye. Retrieved from: <https://www.the7eye.org.il/380096#comments>

Tausig, Shuki. 2020. "Withholding information, blunt discrimination between reporters and delivering partial information." The Seventh Eye. Retrieved from: <https://www.the7eye.org.il/366923>

The Knesset Website. 2020. "Finally approved: shin-bet to be certified to perform cellular tracing on a limited measure for three weeks." Retrieved from: <https://m.knesset.gov.il/news/pressreleases/pages/press02.07.20.aspx>

Media Pluralism
Score: 6

Israeli policy toward media pluralism is taking a “multivalued approach,” in the sense that an open media field is viewed as part of the democratic order and is thus valued not only for economic but for normative purposes as well. This view justifies utilizing special regulatory tools (as opposed to exclusive antitrust regulation) in order to prevent the concentration of ownership and cross-ownership in the media sector. In this spirit, media regulation in Israel also oversees issues of content (specifically regarding issues of local production and censorship).

In practice, media regulation in Israel is largely structural, controlling ownership of media outlets (radio, and public and private cable and satellite television). The regulators authorize concessionaires and enforce regulation in matters of ownership concentration, cross-ownership and foreign ownership. However, print media is not under the same restraints as broadcast media, and is regulated by antitrust legislation and voluntary self-regulation. Most news websites in Israel are operated by print media companies. There are ongoing efforts to expand regulation to the digital sphere, but no change has been legislated by parliament as of yet.

Citation:

Agmon, Tamir and Tsadik, Ami, “Analyzing economic ramifications of centralization and cross ownerships in the Media,” Knesset Research and Information Center, 2.11.2011 (Hebrew)

Boker, Ran. “Channel Ten will be closed: The merger of Reshet and Channel Ten was approved,” 8.8.2018 (Hebrew): <https://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-5324863,00.html>

“Freedom of the Press: Israel 2017,” Freedom House, 2017 <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2017/israel>

Media Ownership Map, The Seventh Eye website: <https://cdn.the7eye.org.il/uploads/2016/03/the-7th-eye-israel-media-ownership-map72018.pdf>

Halon, E, “Reshet pulls out of a slated merger with Channel Ten,” 15.10.2018, Jerusalem Post: <https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Reshet-pulls-out-of-slated-merger-with-Channel-Ten-569464>

Tal, Yizhar and Ivry-Omer, Dina, “Regulation of electronic communications services in Israel: The need to establish a communications Authority,” Policy research 76 IDI, November 2009: http://en.idi.org.il/media/277043/pp_76.pdf (Hebrew)

Tucker, Nati, “Why did Shlom Ben Tzvi disappear?,” theMarker 3.10.2014: <http://www.themarker.com/markerweek/1.2449472> (Hebrew).

Zrahiya, Zvi, “Israel’s media is riddled with alien interests,” 15.11.2011: <http://www.haaretz.com/business/israel-s-media-is-riddled-with-alien-interests1.395639?localLinksEnabled=false>

Access to
Government
Information
Score: 8

Israel adopted the Freedom of Information Law in 1998, allowing each citizen or resident to apply for information regarding a government authority’s activity, whether written, filmed, recorded or digitized. This legal standing has been the basis of considerable activity by NGOs and private individuals.

Naturally, the right to freedom of information is not absolute, with reasonable restrictions on the basis of national security or privacy issues.

The right to privacy law (1998) grants individuals the right to access their personal information held in government or private-entity databases.

In 2011, government decision No. 2950 established a designated unit for freedom of information in the Ministry of Justice. The unit is also in charged with implementing OECD guidelines for managing and sharing information.

In 2018, the Freedom of Information Unit under the Ministry of Justice launched a digital system for managing freedom of information requests in government ministries. The unit introduced a new procedure to increase the transparency of public committees and launched a new campaign to increase public awareness of “Kol Zchut,” a comprehensive database that provides information on the rights of Israeli residents and how to exercise these rights.

Citation:

“About the unit for freedom of information,” The Ministry of Justice website:<http://index.justice.gov.il/Units/YechidatChofeshHameyda/About/Pages/OdotHayechida.aspx> (Hebrew)

“Annual Report of the unit for freedom of information: 2018,” The Ministry of Justice website: https://www.gov.il/BlobFolder/reports/annual_reports/he/annual%20report%202018%20foiu.pdf

“Freedom of Information Law,” 1998: <http://www.freedominfo.org/documents/Israel-FOIL1998.pdf>

“Protection of privacy law,” 1981: <http://www.justice.gov.il/NR/rdonlyres/C5205E15-3FE9-4037-BA0F-62212B40773A/18334/ProtectionofPrivacyLaw57411981unofficialtranslatio.pdf>

“The Government approved today the publication of all governmental databases” <http://www.themarker.com/news/politics/1.3053541> (Hebrew)

“The movement for freedom of information”: <http://www.meida.org.il/>

Government ICT Authority: Open Government Action Plan for 2018-2019, <http://yoursay.gov.il/cio/File/Index/nap3english/>

Albin, Einat, Ittai Bar-Siman-Tov, Aeyal Gross & Tamar Hostovsky-Brandes. (2021). Israel Report, LAC19 Compendium, Lex-Atlas: Covid-19. Retrieved from: <https://lexatlas-c19.org>.

Persico, Oren. 2020. “The pressure worked.” The Seventh Eye. Retrieved from: <https://www.the7eye.org.il/380096#comments>

Tausig, Shuki. 2020. “Withholding information, blunt discrimination between reporters and delivering partial information.” The Seventh Eye. Retrieved from: <https://www.the7eye.org.il/366923>

Civil Rights and Political Liberties

Civil Rights
Score: 5

By law, the effort to safeguard civil rights is constituted in the Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty, which protects the right of each citizen to

privacy, property, dignity, life and so forth. This basic law is meant to carry the spirit of the law and is procedurally protected from nullification. However, provisions from the law can be overruled under specific urgencies stated by the government and the courts. Much of the work of protecting civil rights in Israel is done through judicial review, which operates independently from the legislator and the executive branches. Civil rights claims are voiced through the media, NGO activities, appeals to the Supreme Court, legislative amendments and appeals to government bodies that investigate public complaints.

Yet, there is a gap between the formal guarantees of equal civil rights and the reality of unequal opportunities. Such a gap exists mainly when there is a conflict between civil rights and other core social values (e.g., religious identity, security, and communal rights). According to the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), the government and members of parliament have extensively promoted initiatives that infringe on basic democratic principles, such as minority rights, freedom of speech and the activity of civil society organizations. In particular, the ACRI has expressed concern about the central role played by the Knesset in these initiatives. While not all legislative proposals were adopted, those that were have influenced public discourse on and attitudes toward democracy, human rights, minority groups and the rule of law, among other things.

Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, political and civil rights have been curtailed at various points. Beyond that, Israel relied mainly on emergency regulations to determine its policies. These regulations were made under Basic Law: The Government, which enables the government to pass regulations during a state of emergency. Israel has been in a state of emergency since its founding in 1948 (Gross & Kostic 2021). Emergency regulations can change Knesset legislation, temporarily expropriate legislation or set different conditions for a limited period of three months. Israel has used emergency regulations throughout its history, including during routine periods. However, the use of emergency regulations throughout the COVID-19 period has been higher and more widespread than during any other crisis in the history of the State of Israel, including during wars and military operations. In response to demands by the attorney general and the Supreme Court to cease using of emergency regulations, the Knesset legislated the Coronavirus Law (Gross & Kostic 2021), which grants the government the authority to declare a state of emergency due to the coronavirus and issues regulations to set restrictions accordingly.

Citation:

“Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty”: http://www.knesset.gov.il/laws/spec_ial/eng/basic3_eng.htm

Dahan, Tal, “Situation report: The state of human rights in Israel and the OPT 2017,” The Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), <https://campaigns.acri.org.il/report2017en/>

Hermann, Tamar et.al., The Israel Democracy Index 2018, The Israel Democracy Institute, Jerusalem 2018, <https://en.idi.org.il/media/12170/the-israeli-democracy-index-2018.pdf>

Morag, G. and Friedson Y. "Shaked unveils criminal justice system reform bill," Ynet, 28/05/2018: <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-5273104,00.html>

The Association for Civil Rights in Israel. "2018 – A bad year for democracy Human Rights in Israel – A Second Snapshot," October 2018 (Hebrew): https://a59952db-05ff-468c-a8f0-411f44dfbc9c.filesusr.com/ugd/01368b_4dff38e27124eea80154d408b5badf3.pdf

ACRI: Israel 2020: 20 Proposals for the New Knesseth, December 2019, https://0aac55a-bbc6-4bf3-bd01-242c802789e7.usrfiles.com/ugd/0aac55_5bab9d0d551b4dc789f913b2ecdcf7c4.pdf

Albin, Einat, Ittai Bar-Siman-Tov, Aeyal Gross & Tamar Hostovsky-Brandes. 2021. Israel Report, LAC19 Compendium, Lex-Atlas: Covid-19: <https://lexatlas-c19.org>.

Bar-Siman-Tov, Ittai 2020. 'Covid-19 Meets Politics: The Novel Coronavirus as a Novel Challenge for Legislatures'. The Theory and Practice of Legislation 8(1-2): 11-48.

Gross, Aeyal and Nir Kosti. 2021. 'The Paradox of the Corona Law', Verfassungsblog, Retrieved from <https://verfassungsblog.de/the-paradox-of-israels-coronavirus-law>

Kosti, Nir. 2020. 'Emergency Regulations: Contemporary and Historical Perspective', Icon-S-IL Blog, retrieved from <https://israeliconstitutionalism.wordpress.com/2020/07/07/%D7%AA%D7%A7%D7%A0%D7%95%D7%AA-%D7%A9%D7%A2%D7%AA-%D7%97%D7%99%D7%A8%D7%95%D7%9D-%D7%9E%D7%91%D7%98-%D7%A2%D7%9B%D7%A9%D7%95%D7%95%D7%99-%D7%95%D7%94%D7%99%D7%A1%D7%98%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%99-%D7%A0>

Political Liberties
Score: 5

Israel's lack of a constitution means that the guarantee of political rights is confided to status of basic laws. Thus, they are not constitutional as such. For these and other reasons, the responsibility to protect political liberties still lies with the Israeli parliament. However, parliamentary activity has not been conducive to this task. In the last few years, many pieces of legislation and proposed legislation appear to undermine aspects of democracy and due process.

For example, the Disclosure Requirements for Organizations Funded by Foreign Political Entities Law, legislated in 2016, requires NGOs that receive more than half of their income from foreign governments to submit an annual report to the registrar of non-profit associations in the Ministry of Justice. This law was criticized for applying almost exclusively to human rights and left-wing organizations: 25 of the 27 organizations in Israel that get more than half their funding from foreign governments are human rights organizations identified with the left.

Other problematic legislation prohibited people who have supported a boycott of the state of Israel from entering Israel. However, many problematic

proposals did not win parliamentary passage or were eventually softened in part due to public opposition.

Citation:

Ben Shitrit, Lihi, "Israel's Shrinking Democracy." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 10.03.2016: <http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/63006>

Dahan, Tal, "Situation report: The state of human rights in Israel and the OPT 2016," The Association for Civil Rights in Israel, <http://www.acri.org.il/campaigns/report2016en/>

"Freedom in the world 2019," Freedomhouse website: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2019>

"Israel minister pursues tougher anti-BDS law," Memo Middle East Monitor, 2/11/2017: <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20171102-israel-minister-pursues-tougher-anti-bds-law/>

Knesset Press Release "Knesset passes NGO transparency law," 12.07.2016, <http://main.knesset.gov.il/News/PressReleases/pages/press120716.aspx> (Hebrew)

"Project Democracy: The Arab minority," The Association for Civil Rights in Israel (October 2010): <http://democracy-project.org.il/he/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/democracy-minorities.pdf>

Yishai, Yael, "Civil Society in Israel," Carmel, Jerusalem, 2003.

Gild-Hayo, Debbie, "Antidemocratic Legislation: Ramifications for Human Rights and the Work of NGO," ACRI, May 26, 2019, https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/0aac5_0c8b24f620e24b2eaa25249135148d47.pdf

Asseburg, Muriel, "Shrinking Spaces in Israel," SWP Comments, September 2017, https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/comments/2017C36_ass.pdf

Non-
discrimination
Score: 5

Israel's main venue for dealing with cases of discrimination is the court system, particularly the Supreme Court, which addresses cases of discrimination against women and minorities in professional, public and state spheres. Israel has long-standing institutional mechanisms intended to promote equality, such as the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women in the Prime Minister's Office and the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission in the Ministry of the Economy. However, these tend to offer ad hoc solutions instead of comprehensive and long-term plans. Attempts to pass a basic law protecting equality to join existing legislation protecting human dignity and liberty did not yield results.

Progress was achieved in recent years regarding women's and gay rights. For example, non-biological same-sex parents have been made eligible for guardianship rights and same-sex marriages conducted in foreign countries are recognized by the state. Some advances have also been made in protecting the rights of disabled persons.

Nonetheless, discrimination is prevalent and systematic regarding Palestinians' rights. Following Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem in 1967, Arab residents were issued Israeli identity cards and given the option of obtaining Israeli

citizenship, though most choose not to seek citizenship for political reasons. These non-citizens have many of the same rights as Israeli citizens, except the right to vote in national elections. They can vote in municipal as well as Palestinian Authority elections, and remain eligible to apply for Israeli citizenship. However, Israeli law strips non-citizens of their local residency if they stay outside the city for more than three months.

A 2003 law denies citizenship and residency status to Palestinian residents of the West Bank or Gaza who marry Israeli citizens. This measure affects about 15,000 couples and has been criticized as blatantly discriminatory. In 2011, the Knesset passed a law allowing the courts to revoke the citizenship of any Israeli convicted of spying, treason or aiding the enemy. A number of civil rights groups and the Shin Bet security service criticized the legislation as unnecessary and overly burdensome.

Citation:

Association for Civil Rights in Israel, <http://www.acri.org.il/campaigns/report2016en/>

Gild-Hayo, Debbie, Overview of Anti-Democratic Legislation Advanced by the 20th Knesset, October 2018: <https://law.acri.org.il/en/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Overview-of-Anti-Democratic-Legislation-October-2018.pdf>

Heruti-Sover, Tali. "Gender Wage Gap in Israel Among Highest in the West," 11/10/2017: <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/business/gender-wage-gap-in-israel-among-highest-in-the-west-1.5457004>

Heruti-Sover, Tali. "Report Finds Wide but Varying Pay Gaps by Gender, Religion and Background," 19/2/2019, Haaretz: <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/business/report-finds-wide-but-varying-pay-gaps-by-gender-religion-and-background-1.6953271>

Mako editorial "The Surrogacy Storm: General Strike and Rage March of the LGTB Community," 18/7/18, MAKO: <https://www.mako.co.il/pride-news/local/Article-530a21c9e6da461006.htm>

Sober, Tali Heruty "A rise of 23% in the employment of disabled," The Marker, 29/11/17: <https://www.themarker.com/career/1.4647745>

Swirsky, S., E. Konor-Atias, "Social status report 2017," January 2018. (Hebrew) <http://adva.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Social-Report-2017.pdf>

Tzameret-Kertcher, Hagar, Naomi Chazan, Hanna Herzog, Yulia Basin, Ronna Brayer-Garb and Hadass Ben Eliyahu. "The Gender Index, Gender Inequality in Israel 2018," The Van-Leer Jerusalem Institute, <https://genderindex.vanleer.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Gender-Index-2018.pdf>

Zohar, Gal, "Equal participation – comparative view- Israel and the World," Report to the Ministry of Justice, 2016 <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:wFtosSXqLwAJ:www.justice.gov.il/Units/Netzivut/Shivyon/SiteDocs/Disabilities-Affirmative-Action-Report.docx+&cd=2&hl=iw&ct=clnk&gl=il>

Minority Rights Group International, World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples – Israel: Ethiopian Jews, August 2018, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5ba34c097.html>

Rule of Law

Legal Certainty
Score: 6

Several institutions in Israel are responsible for reviewing the activities of the government and public administration. The State Comptroller, the attorney general and the Supreme Court (ruling as the High Court of Justice) conduct legal reviews of the actions of the government and administration. The attorney general is in charge of making sure that government actions are conducted in accordance with the rule of law. The Supreme Court hears appeals from citizens, and Palestinian residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which force the state to explain and justify its actions.

The government of Israel can make extensive use of emergency regulations to determine its policies, since Israel has been under a state of emergency since its founding in 1948 (Gross & Kostis 2021). Emergency regulations can change Knesset legislation, temporarily expropriate legislation or set different conditions for a limited period of three months. In addition, some legal arrangements provide for ad hoc state action to deal with security threats and the Emergency Powers (Detention) Law of 1979 provides for indefinite administrative detention without trial.

Citation:

“Administrative detention,” B’tselem http://www.btselem.org/administrative_detention/statistics

Barzilay, Gad and David Nachmias,” The Attorney General to the government: Authority and responsibility,” IDI website September 1997 (Hebrew)

Bob, Y. J. “Court orders Government to pass a new law or draft all Haredim,” JPost, 12/9/17, <http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/Court-orders-govt-to-pass-new-law-or-draft-all-haredim-504901>

The Israel Democracy Institute, 2022. “2021 Israeli Democracy Index: Israel’s Legal System.” Retrieved from: <https://en.idi.org.il/articles/37856>

The Israel Democracy Institute. “Q&A on the Override Clause,” 17.5.2018: <https://en.idi.org.il/articles/23521>

“Knesset opens Winter Assembly; Speaker Edelstein: “Parliament’s status eroded due to lack of separation of powers,” The Knesset Website, 23/10/2017: https://www.knesset.gov.il/spokesman/eng/PR_eng.asp?PRID=13599

Luria, G “How many Laws are dismissed in the world?” IDI, 22.4.18: <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/23326>

Weitz, Gidi. “In Israel, No Gatekeepers to Stop Netanyahu’s War on Media,” Haaretz, 02/04/2017: <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.780680>

Transparency International, “Israel releases first ever National Integrity System report on Israel’s government, institutions,” 11.11.2014: https://www.transparency.org/news/pressrelease/tlIsrael_releases_first_ever_national_integrity_system_report_on_israels_go

Judicial Review
Score: 8

The Supreme Court is generally viewed as a highly influential institution. It has repeatedly intervened in the political domain to review the legality of political agreements, decisions and allocations. The Israeli Supreme Court has struck down only 18 laws since 1992, a relatively low number compared to other countries. Since a large part of the Supreme Court's judicial review in recent years is over the activities of a rightist coalition and parliament, it is often criticized for being biased toward the political left. In recent years, public trust in the judicial system has sharply declined. Nevertheless, the Supreme Court has maintained its position as one of the three governing institutions with the highest level of trust (after the IDF and the president of Israel)

The independence of the judiciary system is established in the basic law on the judiciary (1984), various individual laws, the ethical guidelines for judges (2007), numerous Supreme Court rulings, and in the Israeli legal tradition more broadly. These instruct governing judicial activity by requiring judgments to be made without prejudice, ensuring that judges receive full immunity, generally banning judges from serving in supplementary public or private positions, and more. Judges are regarded as public trustees, with an independent and impartial judicial authority considered as a critical part of the democratic order.

Citation:

Azulai, Moran and Ephraim, Omri, "Overruling the infiltration law: The Knesset goes into battle," Ynet 23.9.2014:<http://ynet.co.il.d4p.net/articles/0,7340,L-4574094,00.html> (Hebrew).

Bob, Yonah Jeremy "Ayelet Shaked To 'Post': High Court More Conservative Than Four Years Ago," 28/10/18, JPOST, <https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Ayelet-Shaked-High-court-more-conservative-than-four-years-ago-570354>

Herman, Tamar, "Israeli Democracy index 2016," The Israel Democracy Institute. (Hebrew) <https://www.idi.org.il/media/7799/democracy-index-2016.pdf>

Hovel, Revital, "Right-wing Israeli Ministers Introduce Plan Targeting High Court's Powers," Haaretz, 15/9/2017, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.812425>.

Kremnitzer, Mordechai, "Judicial Responsibility at its Best," IDI website 31.5.2012 (Hebrew).

Plesner, Yohanan. "The Knesset and the Court: Is This Israel's Override Election?," The Israel Democracy Institute, 16.9.2019: [en.idi.org.il/articles/28629](https://www.idi.org.il/articles/28629)

Svorai, Moran, "Judicial independence as the main feature in judicial ethics" (2010) (Hebrew), <http://www.mishpat.ac.il/files/650/3168/3185/3186.pdf>

Appointment of
Justices
Score: 8

According to Israel's basic laws, all judges are to be elected by a special committee, which consists of nine members: the president of the Supreme Court, two other Supreme Court judges, the minister of justice (who also serves as the chairman) and another minister, two Knesset members, and two representatives of the Chamber of Advocates. Since 2008, a nominated

candidate must gain the support of at least seven, instead of five, committee members. This change limited the power of the five non-politicians in the committee, and requires cooperation and compromises within the committee.

The cooperative procedure balances various interests and institutions within the government in order to ensure pluralism and protect the legitimacy of appointments. The process receives considerable media coverage and is subject to public criticism, which is usually concerned with whether justices' professional record or other considerations (e.g., social views, loyalties, and political affiliation) should figure into their appointment.

Citation:

Bob, Yonah Jeremy. "Will Nave replacement end Shaked's judicial revolution? - analysis." *The Jerusalem Post*, 12.6.2019: <https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Will-new-lawyers-president-end-Shaked-judicial-revolution-Analysis-592167>

Gueta, Yasmin and Efrat Newman, "Like the 'Big Brother': The Procedure to Judge Nomination," *The Marker*, 15.2.2016: <http://www.themarker.com/law/1.2851297>

Hovel, Revital. "Minister, Chief Justice Agree on Israel's Next Supreme Court President," *Haaretz*, 10/7/2017: <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.800449>

Jerusalem Post Staff, Yonah Jeremy Bob. "Efi Nave, Head of Israeli bar, arrested in sex-for-judgeship scandal." *The Jerusalem Post*, 16.1.2019: <https://www.jpost.com/Breaking-News/Senior-lawyer-arrested-on-suspicion-of-illegal-appointment-of-judges-577580>

Lurie, Guy. "The Judicial Selection Committee." Jerusalem: Israel Democracy Institute, 2019.

Rubinstein, Amnon, "The constitutional law of the state of Israel," Shoken, 2005.

Shoken, 2005. "The Ombudsman on judges office: Annual report 2011," 2012. (Hebrew), <http://index.justice.gov.il/Units/NezivutShoftim/pirsomeyhanaziv/Doch/Documents/2012.pdf>

"The Ombudsman of judges office: Annual report 2013," Jerusalem 2014 (Hebrew), <http://index.justice.gov.il/Units/NezivutShoftim/MainDocs/Report2013.pdf>.

Corruption
Prevention
Score: 6

A survey of the Israeli legal framework identifies three primary channels of a corruption-prevention strategy. These include maintaining popular trust in public management; ensuring the proper conduct of public servants; and ensuring accountability within the civil service. Israel pursues these goals by various means: It established a legal and ethical framework to guide civil servants and the courts, reinforced the position of the State Comptroller through the passage of a basic law (1988) in order to ensure government accountability, adapted the civil service commission's authority to manage human resources (e.g., appointments, salaries) and so forth. In 2005, Israel was one of 140 states to sign a national anti-corruption treaty and began implementing it in 2009, issuing annual progress reports.

Criminal inquiries into politicians are common. Prominent examples in recent years include charging Prime Minister Netanyahu with bribery, fraud and

breach of trust; indicting the minister for welfare and social services, Haim Katz, for fraud and breach of trust; the minister of the interior, Aryeh Deri, signing a plea deal for tax crimes; the sentencing of former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to six years in prison for accepting bribes while serving as mayor of Jerusalem; and the sentencing of former Tourism Minister Stas Misezhnikov to 15 months in prison for fraud and breach of trust.

Citation:

Aliasuf, Itzak, "Ethics of public servants in Israel," 1991 (Hebrew) <https://bit.ly/3dNefmG>

Ariel, Omri, New poll shows 72% view Israel as a corrupt country, 08.01.2016, <http://www.jerusalemonline.com/news/in-israel/local/poll-72-see-israel-as-corrupt-18361>

Bob, Yonah Jeremy. "AG moves to indict Haim Katz for fraud; Drops IAI charges," The Jerusalem Post, 15.8.2019: <https://www.jpost.com/Breaking-News/Mandelblit-Haim-Katz-will-be-indicted-for-breach-of-trust-598601>

Bob, Yonah Jeremy. "State Attorney to Attorney General: Indict Arye Deri," The Jerusalem Post, 15.8.2019: <https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/State-Attorney-to-Attorney-General-Indict-Deri-598752>

Holmes, Oliver. "Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu indicted for bribery and fraud." The Guardian, 21.11.2019: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/nov/21/israeli-prime-minister-benjamin-netanyahu-indicted-for-bribery-and>

"Massive scope of Yisrael Beiteinu corruption scandal revealed," Ynet 25.12.2014:<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4607728,00.html>

Ma'anit, Chen, Former tourism minister Stas Misezhnikov signs plea bargain, Globes, 31/10/2017: <http://www.globes.co.il/en/article-former-tourism-minister-stas-misezhnikov-signs-plea-bargain-1001209817>

Transparency International: Corruption Perceptions Index 2018: <http://www.ti-israel.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/CPI-2018-Executive-summary-PRINT.pdf>

Transparency International, Corruption Perception Index 2019, 2020, <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2019>
Woolf, Raoul, and ToI, "Lieberman opposes forming Knesset committee just to reject Netanyahu immunity," ToI, 26.11.2019, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/liberman-opposes-forming-knesset-committee-just-to-reject-netanyahu-immunity/>

Good Governance

I. Executive Capacity

Strategic Capacity

Strategic
Planning
Score: 6

Strategic planning units are located under the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), and include the National Economic Council, the National Security Council (NSC) and the Policy Planning Department. Strategic planning and implementation for major issues in Israel are very centralized under the PMO. A recent example is the national handling of the COVID-19 crisis by the NSC instead of the National Emergency Management Authority (NEMA), the designated crisis preparedness and response coordination authority.

In general, the most prominent step taken by the PMO in terms of efforts to foster strategic planning has been the annual publication of the Governmental Plan Book. The book offers a review of the Israeli government's strategic planning units. Since 2019, the PMO has described its updated version of the book as the continuation of the government's efforts to translate government policy into measurable and comparable goals across all policy fields and government offices.

Citation:

"A guide for government planning," The department for policy planning, September 2010 (Hebrew)

Arlozorov, Merav, "Serious, Ambitious, and Improving: Some Good Words on Netanyahu's Government," The Marker, 5.3.2017, <https://www.themarker.com/news/1.3903271>

Cross-Sector round Table, Ministry of Education, 2018 (Hebrew), <http://sheatufim.org.il/subject/cross-sector/education/>

The Government ICT Authority 2019-2021 Strategic Plan, 2019, (Hebrew): https://www.gov.il/BlobFolder/generalpage/strategic_plan_19/en/STRATIGY-%20ICT%20AUTHORITY%20-%20ENGLISH.pdf

"Policy departments – auxiliary tool for navigation," the Reut institute 11.6.2008. Policy Planning round tables, PMO office, June 2016 (Hebrew), <http://www.pmo.gov.il/policyplanning/shituf/Pages/roundtable.aspx> (Hebrew)

Expert Advice
Score: 7

Round Tables: why did we stop them?, Tuvanot (Insight), 2019, https://www.insights.us/blog_he/renewal-at-insights-us

Round Tables in the PMO, Sheatufim, 2019 <https://sheatufim.org.il/subject/cross-sector/pmo/>

The government has several means of interacting with experts and academics, which are generally guided by the Instructions for Public Participation Guide (PMO 2017). Overall, experts can sit on independent public committees to examine the causes and consequences of a specific event or incident. They can also serve in permanent committees that consult with the government on a regular basis, such as the National Economic Council in the PMO, or be summoned by parliamentary committees to present opinions or to offer a different perspective on a certain issue. In addition, think tanks and research institutes act as brokers between the academic world and politics, advocating and offering information on current events and policy issues. A recent example is the national plan for climate change adaptation. As part of planning for the implementation of this plan in 2019 – 2020, the government sought advice from various experts and NGOs.

On security and other issues such as foreign policy, the government tends to consult experts from the military rather than academics. Ministers often appoint an external advisory committee to assist with specific issues, and also often consult informally with academic experts, primarily to receive guidance that is not influenced by political interests. In addition, the government consults with professionals via policy-planning roundtables, digital forums and Q&A platforms.

Citation:

Blockchain Technology Takes Hold in Israel: Expert Take, Cointelegraph, 2018 (Hebrew): <https://cointelegraph.com/news/blockchain-technology-takes-hold-in-israel-expert-take>

“Conclusions of the committee for the examination of the fiscal policy with respect to oil and gas resources in Israel,” State of Israel official publication, 2011 (Hebrew): http://www.financeisrael.mof.gov.il/FinanceIsrael/Docs/En/publications/02_Full_Report_Nonincluding_Appendixes.pdf

Hever, Shir, “The Privatization of Security,” 2012, Van Leer Institute

OECD (2015), “Scientific Advice for Policy Making: The Role and Responsibility of Expert Bodies and Individual Scientists,” OECD Science, Technology and Industry Policy Papers, No. 21, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5js3311jcpwb-en>

Government decision number 2025 on rural development, 2015 (Hebrew): https://www.gov.il/he/Departments/policies/2014_des2025

Government Decision number 4079, “Israel’s preparations for adaptation to climate change: implementation of the recommendations to the government for a strategy and a national action plan,” 2018 (Hebrew): https://www.gov.il/he/Departments/policies/dec4079_2018

PMO Office 2017, Instructions for Public Participation, 2017 (Hebrew):
<http://www.pmo.gov.il/policyplanning/shituf/Documents/all%20web.pdf>

The Ministry of Environment, Climate Change Adaptation plan, 2019,
<http://www.sviva.gov.il/subjectsEnv/ClimateChange/AdaptationKnowledgeCenter/Pages/default.aspx#GovXParagraphTitle2>

Interministerial Coordination

GO Expertise
 Score: 6

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) need for a staff of independent and professional analysts originally led to the establishment of the National Economic Council, the National Security Council and the Policy-Planning Department that advises the prime minister directly. The 2012 Kochik committee viewed these as positive but insufficient steps and recommended that the PMO's consulting mechanism be strengthened.

Recent changes have shifted this system. The PMO's planning reforms have de facto given it the capacity to guide and advise other ministries regarding their policy proposals and bills.

The PMO also has the expertise to evaluate ministerial draft bills through Regulatory Impact Assessments. This is a part of a broader policy to reduce the so-called regulatory burden. Following a 2014 government decision, the PMO has delegates in government ministries who manage regulations affecting each ministry. This mechanism also allows for closer supervision of laws and the work of government offices.

Citation:

Arian, Asher, "Politics in Israel: The Second Republic," 2nd Edition 2005 (Hebrew).

Reducing the Regulatory Burden Discussing the decision of the Ministerial Committee on Social and Economic Affairs no, 39, September 2014,
<http://www.pmo.gov.il/policyplanning/Regulation/Documents/dec2118.pdf>

"Reduction of Regulatory Burden Book," PMO Office, March 2018 (Hebrew):
<http://go.ynet.co.il/pic/calcala/regulation.pdf>

"The committee to investigate the prime minister's headquarter," Official report (April 2012) (Hebrew).

Line Ministries
 Score: 7

Line ministers involve the PMO in the preparation of policy proposals which require legislative and/or budgetary changes, especially when there are disagreements between the relevant line ministry, and the Ministry of Finance and/or the Ministry of Justice, which are involved in any budgetary and legislative change.

Citation:

Barnea, Shlomit and Ofer Kenig, "Political nominations in the executive branch," IDI website June 2011

(Hebrew)

Reducing the Regulatory Burden Discussing the decision of the Ministerial Committee on Social and Economic Affairs no, 39, September 2014 (Hebrew): <http://www.pmo.gov.il/policyplanning/Regulation/Documents/dec2118.pdf>

“Government bill amendment 868 from 12.8.2012,” PMO official website: <http://www.pmo.gov.il/Secretary/sederyom/Pages/seder120812.aspx> (Hebrew)

Weisman, Lilach, “Expansion of the prime minister’s authorities was approved; We must stop the madness,” Globes website 12.8.2012: <http://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1000773448> (Hebrew)

Cabinet
Committees
Score: 6

The government is authorized to appoint cabinet committees (called ministerial committees) to handle different policy issues and is obligated to appoint certain committees such as the State Security Cabinet, which is in charge of foreign and security policy, and the ministerial committee for legislation. Currently, there are 23 ministerial committees on a wide range of topics. According to past studies, 50% of governmental decisions between 2009 and 2015 were first approved by a ministerial committee. The impact of ministerial committees on cabinet proposals and operations varies. The permanent committees are considered pivotal to government work. Some of the ad hoc committees are also influential, while others reflect a more symbolic status.

Citation:

Cabinet committees and their authorities,” the ministry of Justice website 24.6.1996 (Hebrew)

Data proves: Ayelet Shaked is the real prime minister of the State of Israel, June 2018, <https://www.haaretz.co.il/blogs/tomeravital/BLOG-1.6200567>

Friedberg, Chen, “The Knesset’s Committees – Foretold Failure?,” The Ben-Gurion Law Proposal – Amendments of ‘Basic Law: The Government,’ 2015

‘Decade of Ministerial Committees – comparative study’ – January 2016, Citizens’ Empowerment in Israel (Hebrew): <http://www.ceci.org.il/sites/citizens/UserContent/files/knowledge/govfunction/MinisterCommittees.pdf>

“Ministerial Committees.” PMO’s website (12.11.2015), <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/GovernmentSecretariat/Pages/MinisterialCommittees.aspx>

Much housing, little health: the priorities of the government are revealed, The Marker, 2017, <https://www.themarket.com/news/1.3263480>

Research Institute for the Study of Israel & Zionism (January 2010) (Hebrew)

“The guidelines for government work,” PMO’s website (Hebrew)

Working Plan Book 2017-18, PMO Office, March 2017: <http://www.plans.gov.il/pdf2017/> (Hebrew)

The Ministerial Committee on Legislation postponed the discussion by 40% of the bills, Calcalist, May 2015, <https://www.calcalist.co.il/local/articles/0,7340,L-3688732,00.html>

‘Transparency in the Ministerial Committee for Legislation’ – February 2016, The Social Guard, Transparency in the Ministerial Legislative Committee, (Hebrew) http://fs.knesset.gov.il/%5C20%5CCommittees%5C20_cs_bg_325109.pdf

Ministerial
Bureaucracy
Score: 5

The government seeks to improve interministerial cooperation in order to overcome bureaucratic entanglements and political power struggles. In so doing, it has introduced roundtable meetings, director generals and vice-director generals of ministries coordination forums, guidelines, and digital information platforms. However, experts say that ministries are essentially territorial in nature, and information sharing between ministries is difficult at best.

This lack of communication partially results from the government's highly centralized budget process, which is controlled by the Ministry of Finance, as this process makes public servants defensive of limited and strictly supervised resources. In 2016, a report by the State Comptroller suggested that the lack of communication regarding foreign affairs is a result of the transfer of duties from away from main ministries such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to other ministries. The report also asserted that interministerial disagreements are delaying the publication of regulations necessary for the implementation of laws.

More so, it seems that in some cases various ministries are responsible for the same topic or field of expertise and that there is no coordination between them. This is somewhat deliberate as some of the reforms reflect the personal interests of the prime minister's agenda. For example, the Ministry of Strategic Affairs and Public Diplomacy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs came into conflict regarding BDS movements and the question of which ministry was responsible given the lack of coordination between the ministries.

Citation:

"About: Public sharing," Sharing official website (Hebrew) "Failures of the public sector and directions for change," The committee for social and economic change website (Hebrew)

Barda, Moshe, "Coordination between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defense," The Knesset Research Center 2007: <http://www.knesset.gov.il/mmm/data/pdf/m01880.pdf> (Hebrew)

Bar-Kol, Yair, "Appointing a minister for interministerial cooperation," TheMarker 3.4.2013: <http://www.themarker.com/opinion/1.1983509> (Hebrew)

Haber, Carmit, "Managerial culture blocks to implementing open government policy," The Israel Democracy Institute (March 2013) (Hebrew)

Israel Democracy Institute, The two great successes of the outgoing government – thanks to inter-agency cooperation, 2019 [Hebrew]
<https://www.idi.org.il/articles/25492>

Ravid, Barak. "Watchdog: Power Struggles Between Ministries Hindered Israel's Battle Against BDS," 24.5.2016, <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.721284>

Reducing the number of mandatory regulations that have not yet been enacted, Government decision number 2588, PMO, April 2017, https://www.gov.il/he/departments/policies/2017_dec2588

“The committee to investigate the Prime Minister’s headquarter,” Official state report, April 2012 (Hebrew).

“The division of electronics and technologies,” Accountant General website (Hebrew) “The guide for governmental sharing: A model for cooperation between ministries,” official state publication, 2013: <http://www.ihaklai.org.il/Portals/0/Documents/articles/לדומו%20היותיש%20לעפ%20הלוועפ%20ב%20יב%20מ%20ידרש%20מ%20לשמה%20ה.pdf> (Hebrew)

The Foreign Affairs Ministry closes the department that handled BDS
<https://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-4991405,00.html>

“The Leadership Academy- founding statement,” November 2014, Civil Service Commission website:
<http://www.csc.gov.il/Tenders/TendersServices/Documents/LeadershipAcademyDoc.pdf>

The Open Administration Work Plan for 2018-2019, Israel’s ICT Authority,
<http://yoursay.gov.il/cio/File/Index/nap3hebrew/>

Zinger, Ronny. “175 laws are not implanted because ministries didn’t set regulation for them” – Calcalist, 25.1.2016 (Hebrew): <http://www.calcalist.co.il/local/articles/0,7340,L-3679237,00.html>

Informal
Coordination
Score: 5

Israel’s government system is greatly influenced by informal coordination mechanisms, such as coalition obligations and internal party politics. However, due to its highly fragmented party system, it is hard to determine whether they support or undermine formal mechanisms of interministerial coordination. While coordination between like-minded parties may be made easier by the situation, fragmentation may result in stagnation over disputed policies.

Citation:

“Annual report 61 for the year 2010: Treatment of prolonged interministerial disagreements,” The State Comptroller office website (Hebrew)

Blander, Dana and Ben Nur, Gal, “Governmental coalitions: A steering mechanism in the political system,” in The political system in Israel 2013: <http://www.idi.org.il/מירמאמו-מירפס/הירפסה/רואל-האצוה/מירמאמו-מירפס>-הירפסה/רואל-האצוה/מירמאמו-מירפס (Hebrew).

“Coalition management,” the Knesset website: <http://main.knesset.gov.il/About/Lexicon/Pages/coalition-management.aspx> (Hebrew)

Rivlin, Reuven, “The intellectual independency of the Knesset member: the limit of the coalition obligation,” The Israel Democracy Institute (December 2010) (Hebrew).

Digitalization for
Interministerial
Coordination
Score: 6

The Israeli Government ICT Authority was created in 2012 and placed under the Prime Minister’s Office in 2015. In 2013, it introduced the Digital Israel program to assist government communication with the public by improving the digitalization of government offices. The initiative aims to strengthen public engagement through a series of websites and online forms, and improve coordination between public, domestic and international NGO, academic, and government actions.

The authority also plans to digitize all services provided by the government and interministerial services. For example, 880 out of 960 forms, which were

comes to implementing RIA inside its own ministries. An OECD report from 2018 stated that offices inside the Israeli government have not used RIAs correctly and ignored it in some cases. The last report summarizing regulation improvement pertained to 2018. This report detailed some 60 regulation reduction processes in most government ministries. While the report does not include data on the overall effect of the process vis-à-vis the goal of reducing bureaucratic regulations by 25%, it states that so far ILS 4 billion has been saved (on an approximately ILS 1.3 trillion economy). In late-2021, the government passed the Regulation Fundamentals Law, according to which ministers and regulators have to consult the new Regulation Authority regarding the economic, social and environmental implications of all regulations.

Citation:

Economic Affairs Committee, Committee Protocol of 28.10.15 (Hebrew):

<http://main.knesset.gov.il/Activity/committees/Economics/Conclusion/coc281015.pdf>

“Improving regulation in Israel and easing the burden of bureaucracy is a proposal for a multi-year plan“, IDI Website (Hebrew):

<https://www.idi.org.il/media/8867/streamlining-regulation-in-israel-and-easing-the-bureaucratic-burden-proposal-for-a-multi-year-program.pdf>

Government Regulation Website, 2018 (Hebrew): <http://regulation.gov.il/default.aspx>

Government Regulation Website, The regulatory burden reduction book of 2018, July 2019 (Hebrew):

<http://regulation.gov.il/uploads/reports/7/2018reg.pdf>

RIA Guide, Governmental Regulation Website (Hebrew):

<http://regulation.pmo.gov.il/RIAGuide/Pages/RIA.aspx>

RIA Report data, Government Regulation Website, 2018 (Hebrew): http://regulation.gov.il/RIA_REP

RIA Report data, Government Regulation Website, 2019 (Hebrew): http://regulation.gov.il/RIA_REP

“Report from the committee for improving regulatory mechanisms in Israel and reviewing interfaces between various regulators in the market,” official report (2013) (Hebrew).

“The Five Year plan of 2015-2019“, Government Regulation Website, 2018,

http://regulation.gov.il/homesh_plan

“The OECD: “There will be no choice but to establish a regulatory body in Israel,” Calcalist, 2018 (Hebrew):

<https://www.calcalist.co.il/local/articles/0,7340,L-3742333,00.html>

Almog, Tamar. 2020. “Unprecedented: Thousands of Comments Against the Coronavirus law,” Kan, Retrieved from <https://www.kan.org.il/item/?itemid=71971>

Kogosovski, Mendi. 2020. “The Government Legislation Website is Live.” IsraelDefense, Retrieved from <https://www.israeldefense.co.il/he/node/44489>

Mor, Guy & Alon Jasper. 2020. Parliamentary Arbitrage and the Case for Regulatory Policy in Parliament,” The Theory and Practice of Legislation 7(3): 283-305.

Nagid, Moran and Morin Amitay. 2020. “Public Participation in Health Policy,” Kohelet Policy Forum, Policy Paper no. 66, retrieved from https://kohelet.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/health.involve.paper_.pdf

Quality of RIA
Process
Score: 4

Israel has recently improved its stakeholder engagement in the regulatory process. In 2018, the OECD Regulatory Report Outlook ranked Israel as one of the top four countries with regards to regulatory improvements, with a particularly substantial improvement in public and stakeholder participation and collaboration in RIAs.

Most RIAs conducted between 2016 and 2019 provided an opportunity for the public and other stakeholders to participate in the regulatory process.

Since 2018, the Prime Minister's Office has access to all the RIAs submitted for review by each ministry, all RIAs are published online and the parliament's involvement in these issues has also expanded.

Citation:

"Improving regulation in Israel and easing the burden of bureaucracy Proposal for a multi-year program", Israeli Democracy Institute (Hebrew):

<https://www.idi.org.il/media/8867/streamlining-regulation-in-israel-and-easing-the-bureaucratic-burden-proposal-for-a-multi-year-program.pdf>

"OECD Regulatory Policy Outlook 2018", OECD WEBSITE, 2018:

<https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264303072-en.pdf?expires=1540849342&id=id&accname=ocid195467&checksum=2F91C900404B34AA4EE7659685539C79>

RIA Report data, Government Regulation Website, 2018 (Hebrew): http://regulation.gov.il/RIA_REP

The Knesset, Parliament involvement with RIA – Comparative Analysis, 2019 (Hebrew):

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/Activity/Oversight/Documents/ParliamentLnvolvementRIA2703.pdf>

Sustainability
Check
Score: 6

In 2015, Israel adopted a long-term plan (2015 – 2030) to improve and advance a number of SDGs, as part of the U.N. Agenda 2030 Plan for Sustainable Development. The plan covers a wide variety of fields, including reduction of poverty, hunger and inequality; improvement of health outcomes, life quality and educational quality; promotion of gender equality, smart consumption and innovation; and the development of infrastructure, energy and sustainable production. Together with other members of the United Nations, Israel began reporting in 2016 on its efforts to realize the SDGs.

In addition, since 2011, the government has published "workbooks" every year, detailing the quantitative measures used to compare policies and policy goals over time. In 2019, Israel published its first voluntary national review, which reviews its progress regarding Agenda 2030, and presents its accomplishments in fields such as education, water, healthcare and the economy. However, the report also highlights areas that require further attention.

Citation:

Adopting SDG goals – sustainable development goals", Committee meeting of the 20th Knesset, Open

Knesset Website, 2017 (Hebrew):
<https://oknesset.org/meetings/2/0/2014108.html>

“Agenda 2030 – Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations”. Ministry of the Environment Website
<http://www.sviva.gov.il/subjectsEnv/InternationalRelations/InternationalOrganization/Pages/UN.aspx>

Arlozorov, Meirav. “The Professionalist Revolution of the Government of Israel.” The Marker website. 2018 (Hebrew): <https://www.themarker.com/allnews/1.5846420>.

Corporate Responsibility and Sustainable Development, Netivei Israel Company Website (Hebrew):
<https://bit.ly/2YcOXaR>

“Israel earns UN praise at MFA-IDC conference on UN Sustainable Development,” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs Website, 2017
<http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/InternatlOrgs/Pages/Israel-earns-UN-praise-at-MFA-IDC-Conference-on-UN-SDGs-19-December-2017.aspx>

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals – National Review, 2019 (Hebrew):
<https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/PressRoom/2019/Documents/Israel%20SDG%20national%20review.pdf>

“Vision of Sustainability for Israel in 2030.” Ministry of the Environment Website 2019:
http://kayamut2030.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=181%3Aindicators&catid=59&Itemid=149

Quality of Ex
 Post Evaluation
 Score: 6

According to OECD reports, which are based on surveys with Israeli civil servants, Israel does not have recommended or binding guidelines for the assessment of ex ante or ex post policies. In addition, in Israel there is no procedural framework for evaluating the performance and effectiveness of the state budget. In a survey, which was conducted in 2016, Israel scored 1.7 on ex post policy evaluation (out of four). This score was similar to that OECD average, but significantly lower than the average of 3.08 for EU member states.

Citation:
 “Israel could gain from increased competition, public spending, OECD says “, Times of Israel, 2018 (Hebrew):
<https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-could-gain-from-increased-competition-public-spending-oecd-says/>

“OECD economic scenarios to 2060 illustrate the long-run benefits of structural reforms,” OECD Website,
<http://www.oecd.org/economy/oecd-economic-scenarios-to-2060-illustrate-the-long-run-benefits-of-structural-reforms.htm>

“OECD Regulatory Policy Outlook 2015,” OECD Website,
<https://www.oecd.org/gov/regulatory-policy/Israel-web.pdf>

“OECD Regulatory Policy Outlook 2018“, OECD WEBSITE, 2018
<https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264303072-en.pdf?expires=1540849342&id=id&accname=ocid195467&checksum=2F91C900404B34AA4EE7659685539C79>

“Government at a Glance 2017 – Israel,” OECD Website,
<https://www.oecd.org/gov/gov-at-a-glance-2017-israel.pdf>

Public
Consultation
Score: 7

Societal Consultation

In recent years, Israel has deepened its public involvement arenas in decision-making processes. A number of roundtables have been set up to enable cooperation between the government, the third sector and the business sector (Prime Minister Office 2008). Israel has also adopted a regulation impact assessment (RIA) mechanism, which involves the public and stakeholders in the regulatory decision-making process (Mor & Jasper 2020). In 2020, a government legislation website was established (Kogosovski 2020). The website allows government ministries to publish drafts of legislations, regulations, guidelines and instructions in order to receive comments on them from the general public. Also in 2020, in the wake of the coronavirus crisis, the website went live. While during calmer periods, these drafts are available for public comments for a period of several weeks, during the coronavirus crisis, the time for public comments has shrunk. For example, when the Law Granting Government Special Authorities to Combat Novel Coronavirus (Temporary Provision) 2020, also known as Israel's Coronavirus Law, was circulated for public comment, the public was given only a few days to submit comments on the law (Almog 2020). In general, the number of comments each draft receives varies from a few to tens of thousands, as illustrated in the case of the Coronavirus Law. However, government ministries are not obliged to respond to comments. They are also not required to amend the drafts in light of the comments. Therefore, it is difficult to estimate the public's impact on decision-making. Beyond that, Israel held consultations with various societal bodies actors in preparing and implementing its policy responses, including leaders of religious communities and trade unions, but these processes were not transparent, and were often unfair and clientelist.

Citation:

Census or Democracy: The public is not really involved in urban development, Globes, 2018 (Hebrew): <https://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1001193850>

"Israel has 200 regulators, 12 in the Netherlands, and 80 in Australia, Globes, 2018 (Hebrew): <https://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1001253076>

"Israeli government, civil society, and business community," PMO policy paper (February 2008): http://beinmigzari.pmo.gov.il/Documents/Policy_English.pdf

Limor, Nissan and Avishai, Libat, "Separately and together: Structuring a relationship of cooperation between government and civil society organizations," JDC publication 2013 (Hebrew).

PMO Office 2017, Instructions for Public Participation, 2017 <http://www.pmo.gov.il/policyplanning/shituf/Documents/all%20web.pdf>

"Round table interface: Three years' summary," PMO official brochure (August 2011) (Hebrew)

"The round table and the tri-sectoral discourse," Civil leadership website (Hebrew)

Policy Communication

Coherent
Communication
Score: 7

In recent years, there has been a shift toward creating a more “open” government and improving the government’s communications. Nevertheless, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Israel failed to implement a consistent and proactive crisis communication plan. The agencies responsible for communicating policy measures were uncoordinated and biased, their efforts were often met with suspicion and confusion, and the legitimacy of the measures was questioned.

According to a report issued by the State Comptroller, the government response to the need to provide information regarding the COVID-19 crisis and methods to deal with it differed from the Plan for National communication in a Civilian Emergency. Important positions in the communication array established in the Prime Minister’s Office according to a 2007 government resolution were not filled at the time of the outbreak. Therefore, the array did not operate as planned. In addition, the Ministry of Health, which was required to lead government communication efforts, lacked the requisite infrastructure and professional tools. These were supplemented during the crisis, at a time when infection rates were rising, without taking into account the preparations made and resources already invested in the years preceding the crisis (State Comptroller and Ombudsman 2021).

Israel lacks a body specifically designed to handle public communications. The figures most prevalently identified with the responses and restrictions were, by large, politicians (Gesser-Edelsburg et al. 2020). The lack of such a body led governmental agencies to fulfill this role (Shtreckman 2020), although these agencies were neither designed nor had the professional staff to do so. As a result, government communications suffered from delays in providing information, which led to confusion and public frustration (Carol 2020). In the initial stages of the pandemic, the Ministry of Health launched a Telegram channel to provide data about the pandemic’s situation, and the ministry’s assessments and guidelines. The ministry also published a public dashboard with information about the spread of the pandemic. However, various governmental agencies have held different sets of data on the spread of the virus, and their policy recommendations and communication varied significantly (Efrat, 2020). The absence of a single, seemingly unbiased, broadly agreed, authoritative, source has not helped to gain the public’s trust in the measures taken (Knesset News, 2020).

Citation:

State Comptroller and Ombudsman (2021), “The State of Israel Response to the Covid-19 Crisis.” Retrieved

from: <https://www.mevaker.gov.il/sites/DigitalLibrary/Documents/2021/COVID-19/2021-COVID-19-001-EN.pdf>

Efrat, Boaz. 2020. "Three agencies, zero transparency: Covid-19's data debacle of the Ministry of Health." Walla News, June 21, 2020 (Hebrew). <https://news.walla.co.il/item/3368464>.

Gesser-Edelsburg A, Cohen R, Hijazi R, Abed Elhadi Shahbari N. 2020. "Analysis of Public Perception of the Israeli Government's Early Emergency Instructions Regarding COVID-19: Online Survey Study." J Med Internet Res, vol 22, No 5 (2020), May 15, 2020. <https://www.jmir.org/2020/5/e19370/>.

Shtreckman, Rotem. 2020. "Israel's communication efforts caught Covid-19." The Marker, March 14, 2020 (Hebrew). <https://www.themarker.com/allnews/.premium-1.8674539>.

Carol, Maya. 2020. "'The chaos in public Information': Why do we still not understand the corona guidelines?." Shakuf, November 11, 2020 (Hebrew). <https://shkifut.info/2020/11/hasbara/>.

Carol, Maya. 2020. "Transparency instead of threats: This is how the fight against Corona should be conducted." Shakuf, August 20, 2020 (Hebrew). <https://shkifut.info/2020/08/corona1/>.

The Knesset Website. 2020. "Public Information in the Corona Crisis: The National Security Council has withdrawn its hands; the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Defense have not yet completed the establishment of a coordinated system" (Hebrew). Retrieved from <https://main.knesset.gov.il/News/PressReleases/Pages/press14092020C.aspx>

Implementation

Government
Effectiveness
Score: 6

According to the government's own reports, in recent years, there has been an improvement in the execution of government decisions, with 79% of all objectives achieved in 2018. However, according to critics, this was due to changes to the methodology for measuring the governments' objectives and specifically by lowering the standards of achievement.

The implementation of COVID-19 measures in Israel was accompanied by difficulties and inefficiencies in many aspects, including difficulties caused by political and economic pressure groups, a lack of staff, the inefficient allocation of funds, and budgetary concerns. These inefficiencies made it difficult for the government to implement its policies quickly and effectively. Indeed, Israel ranks 19th worldwide in terms of how well it has handled the COVID-19 pandemic, according to new data compiled by the Bloomberg website. (Bloomberg, 2021).

The implementation of health policies has been partly successful and partly very unsuccessful. Israel's vaccine program outpaced every other county as of January 2021 (Handrix & Rubin 2020) and the number of COVID-19 tests conducted per person in Israel was one of the highest in the world. However, the epidemiological investigation apparatus lacked the required staff at the beginning of the crisis compared to other countries. Six months into the pandemic, the Ministry of Health still relied exclusively on an old, outdated and insufficient epidemiological investigation management system.

Furthermore, an absence of synchronization between the Ministry of Health and Education Ministry's online systems, and between investigators in different cities (which led to numerous delays and errors) undermined the swift implementation of quarantine measures.

Regarding the implementation of economic measures, the lack of suitable protocols and sufficient staff in the Israel Tax Authority (ITO) has created serious tension and frustration between the recipients of emergency economic aid and the agency. The State Comptroller pointed to malfunctions in the agency's computers and online systems, and to distorted eligibility criteria set for receiving aid. Regarding enforcement personnel, the Israeli police force lacked the necessary staff to enforce the restrictions imposed during the three lockdowns. To tackle the lack of policing staff, the government allowed city inspectors to issue fines for violation of restriction rules, a decision that created substantial differences in the level of enforcement between various municipalities, especially between small and large municipalities (Senior 2020).

Citation:

Bloomberg, 2021, "Covid Resilience Ranking" Retrieved from: <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/covid-resilience-ranking/>

Aflalo, Eti. 2020. "Distortions in the ITO's criteria for Covid's grants reception," Calcalist website, October 26, 2020 (Hebrew). <https://www.calcalist.co.il/local/articles/0,7340,L-3865790,00.html>.

Ashkenazi, Shani. 2020. "From Ikea to Hare'l Vizel: how the 'combina' (Shadiness) overcame the Corona." Globes, November 27, 2020 (Hebrew). <https://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1001350995>.

Ashkenazi, Shani. 2020. "The head of epidemiological investigations resigned: "millions go in quarantine for no reason."" Globes, December 23, 2020 (Hebrew). <https://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1001354217>.

Ashkenazi, Shani. 2020. "The Health ministry still does not have an effective system off epidemiological investigations." Globes, October 26, 2020 (Hebrew). <https://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1001347050>.

Ben-Tovim, Idan. 2020. "The Health Ministry stops the development of 'the Shield', preferring to compel you to install a new application." GeekTime website, December 1, 2020 (Hebrew). <https://www.geektime.co.il/hamagen-shield-app-will-not-get-future-updates-will-be-replaced-by-qr-codes-app/>.

Hendrix, Steve and Rubin, Shira. 2020. "Israel is vaccinating so fast it's running out of vaccine." The Washington Post, January 4, 2020 (Hebrew). https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/israel-vaccinates-the-most-people/2021/01/04/23b20882-4e73-11eb-a1f5-fdaf28cfca90_story.html.

Israel's State Comptroller. 2020. "Intermediate report: Israel's tackling with the Covid-19 Crisis," Israel's State Comptroller, (Hebrew).

Senior, Eli. 2020. "Not only policeman: inspectors will also be able to fine violators of Covid-19 distance rules." Ynet website, April 13, 2020 (Hebrew). <https://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-5713909,00.html>.

Ministerial
Compliance
Score: 7

The OECD and global best-practice methods have influenced Israel's organization of government in recent years. Values of transparency, planning, comparability, and supervision are defined by a designated unit in the PMO, arguably improving the implementation of the overall government program by increasing ministerial accountability vis-à-vis the government and the public. These new actions accompany more traditional ways to improve compliance, such as weekly cabinet sessions and interministerial roundtable events.

Ministers' accountability to the Knesset is anchored in Israeli law (Basic Law: the Government 1968). This means that ministries must support and follow government decisions. In addition, coalition agreements, created by the party system in Israel, can be considered a mechanism for the government to force its agenda on ministers. If a minister resists or fails to implement a part of the government program, the minister might be forced by their respective party leader to follow it.

Citation:

Blander, Dana, "Hok Ha-Hesderim: Necessary evil or necessarily evil?," IDI website 14.1.2007 (Hebrew)

Salonim, Ori, "Measuring performance in the public service," The eleventh annual Hertzliya conference official publication (Hebrew)

"Book of working plans 2014," PMO website (March 2014) (Hebrew)

Guidelines of the Attorney General In matters relating to the work Government, Ministry of Justice, 2015
<http://www.justice.gov.il/Publications/News/Documents/AttorneyGeneralGuidelines0515.pdf>

"Gay Couples Denied Right to Surrogacy in New Law," JPOST, 18.7.2018, <https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Surrogacy-bill-passes-Netanyahu-flip-flops-on-homosexual-surrogacy-562810>

Monitoring
Ministries
Score: 7

The basic law on the issue of the government establishes the prime minister's responsibility over the government's advancement of policy goals. This includes monitoring and guiding the work of appointed line ministers. In recent years, the PMO has introduced best-practices reforms featuring elements of transparency, sharing and benchmarking that have improved the systematic monitoring of ministries. A special committee formed to review the PMO identified its comparative weakness when dealing with recommendations from the ministries of Finance and Defense, aggravated by the PMO's tendency to take on the responsibility for executing policies from weaker ministries such as Welfare and Health, thus expending its workload. However, three new professional units have been established in the PMO, each in charge of monitoring related ministries. Moreover, there has been a major improvement in monitoring with the government's annual coordination of all ministerial reports on the implementation of governmental decisions. Currently, the PMO thus has strong ministerial oversight capacities.

Monitoring
Agencies,
Bureaucracies
Score: 6

Citation:

“Reorganization of structure,” Civil Service Commissioner information booklet No. 2, October 2012: <http://www.csc.gov.il/DataBases/NewsLetters/newsletter2/Pages/MattePMO.aspx> (Hebrew).

“Report on the implementation of governmental decisions 2016,” PMO website, <http://www.pmo.gov.il/policyplanning/mimshal/Documents/dm20161607.pdf> (Hebrew)

“The committee to review the PMO’s,” Official state publication, February 2012, (Hebrew)

Environment and Health Fund, Ministry of Health, “Health and Environment in Israel 2017,” <http://www.ehf.org.il/magazines/he/EnvHealthIsrael2017/>, (Hebrew)

While connections between ministries, and government agencies and NGOs are defined by contractual agreements, and financial and legal oversight, the content and quality of services are not under similar appraisal. Most ministries sufficiently monitor their respective agencies, while some – notably education and welfare – are criticized for failing to implement government policies and effectively monitor service provision. According to media reports, government ministries still drag behind when it comes to monitoring and enforcing regulations on private service providers in outsourced services, including protecting the rights of customers and workers.

Citation:

Ben Aeter, Moshe. “Who needs the state-own enterprises?” – Haaretz, 13.04.16 (Hebrew): <http://www.haaretz.co.il/blogs/moshebatar/1.2914354>

Detal, Lior, “The Ministry of Education inc.: This is how hundreds of private bodies receive some 11 billion shekels,” *themarker* 5.10.2014: <http://www.themarker.com/news/education/1.2450395> (Hebrew).

Haber, Carmit, “Managerial culture blocks to implementing open government policy,” *The Israel democracy institute* (March 2013) (Hebrew)

IDF employees: The state leads to the privatization of the production of tanks and armored personnel carriers,” *Globes*, 10.10.2018 (Hebrew): <https://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1001255924>

Israel Government Website, “Government Resolution No. 4398 of December 23, 2018: Smart regulation – Implementing OECD recommendations and amending government decision, 2018 (Hebrew): https://www.gov.il/he/Departments/policies/dec4398_2018

Koren, Ora, “Reform in the public sector: The Ministry of Treasury’s authorities will be restrained, employees will receive incentives,” *TheMarker* website 9.8.2012 (Hebrew)

Limor, Nissan, “Regulation and oversight over third sector organizations,” *Social security* no. 70 (2005), 159-187.

Maman, Daniel, “State Economy in a Neo-Liberal Age,” In *Adva Center’s “30 Years for the Neo-liberal revolution In Israel,”* 2016 (Hebrew): <http://adva.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/30yearsto1985.pdf>

“Public service provisions using outsourcing,” *JDC* publication. (Hebrew)

“The Ministry of Health,” in *Annual report 63c for 2012, the State Comptroller* publication 8.5.2013: <http://www.mevaker.gov.il/he/Reports/Pages/114.aspx?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1> (Hebrew)

The privatization failures: “The Transportation Ministry completely smashed the examiners,” Davar, 22.11.2017 (Hebrew)
<https://www.davar1.co.il/95761/>

“The state admits failures in privatization tenders and supervision of privatized service” – The Marker, 8.9.2016 (Hebrew):
<https://www.themarker.com/news/1.3062114>

“The state comptroller presents: “The privatization of IMI was” cooked up ” – Globes, 26.6.2018 (Hebrew):
<https://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1001243060>

Task Funding
 Score: 7

Local authorities have three main types of income: local taxes (property tax, fines, tolls) earmarked to finance local services, government funds designated for social and educational services, and governmental balancing grants for basic services that poor local authorities are unable to fund. The government’s budgeting procedure for local government is clearly articulated and includes progressive budgetary support. Nevertheless, significant gaps in the economic capacity of rich and poor local authorities hinder the ability of poorer municipalities to implement tasks defined by the central government, especially in education and welfare domains.

Citation:

Ben Basat, Avi and Dahan, Momi, “The political economy of local authorities,” IDI website 2009 (Hebrew)

Ben-Bassat, Avi, Dahan, Momi, and Klor, Esteban F., “Representativeness and efficiency in local government,” Jerusalem: IDI 2013, introduction summary in English: <http://en.idi.org.il/media/2464644/Representativeness-Abstract.pdf>

Ben Basat, Avi and Dahan, Momi, “Strike in local authorities,” IDI website 15.1.2012 (Hebrew)

Dahan, Momi, “Why do local authorities hold back pay?,” IDI website 15.11.2009 (Hebrew)

“Instructions for local authorities’ budget frame proposal for the year 2012,” Ministry of Interior website (Hebrew)

Ministry of Interior budget of 2017-2018, Ministry of Interior website (Hebrew)
https://mof.gov.il/BudgetSite/statebudget/BUDGET2017_2018/MINISTERIESBUDGET/MinisteriesBudget/DocLib/Pnim_Main.pdf

Ministry of Interior Work Plan, 2017-2018, Ministry of Interior Website (Hebrew)
<https://bit.ly/2UogyVw>

Saada, Aria, “Ombudsman’s report 572: Budgeting social services for local authorities equality lacking,” Abiliko website 9.7.2010 (Hebrew)

“The State discriminates in welfare budgets between rich and poor authorities,” Ynet News, 6.12.17 (Hebrew)
<https://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-5052419,00.html>

Constitutional
 Discretion
 Score: 5

Economic gaps between local municipalities in Israel greatly affect their autonomy, so the policy autonomy of rich cities (e.g., Tel Aviv) is significantly higher than that of poor municipalities. In addition, rich

municipalities in Israel are organized in a forum that acts as a pressure group vis-à-vis the government, further enhancing their de facto autonomy. Tensions between local municipalities and central government are also evident when it comes to central government's administrative control over a variety of issues. For example, the minister of interior used the ministry's authority to authorize municipal bylaws to limit supermarket opening hours and public transport operations during Shabbat (Saturday).

Citation:

Benita, Rinat, "Local Authorities in Israel", The Knesset Research Center 17.5.2015:
<http://main.knesset.gov.il/Activity/committees/InternalAffairs/Documents/rashpnim.pdf> (Hebrew).

Crisis of Jewish Bridge on Saturday Shabbat?, Mako, 14.1.2019 (Hebrew):
https://www.mako.co.il/news-military/politics-q1_2019/Article-56ffda4abbd4861004.htm

Deri used the supermarket law, Channel 7 News, 21.6.2018 (Hebrew):
<https://www.inn.co.il/News/News.aspx/376136>

"Government legal proposal 292," Official legal records 1997 (Hebrew)

Hayman-Raiesh, Naomi, "Changes in the status of local government," IDI website, October 2008 (Hebrew)
<https://www.idi.org.il/parliaments/4503/4507>

Lichtman, Moshe. "It's not necessary to recommend to reduce mayors term," 19.9.16 (Hebrew):
<http://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1001152963>

Modi'in joined the "bypassing the supermarkets," Ynet News 3.1.18 (Hebrew):
<https://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-5065779,00.html>

"Municipalities law: A position paper," IDC, December 2011 (Hebrew)

"Not waiting for government: Tel Aviv will fund buses on Saturday," The Marker, 10.10.2019 (Hebrew):
<https://www.themarker.com/dynamo/cars/.premium-1.7961486>

"Stop the train work on Saturday," Israel Today ("Israel Hayom"), 16.9.2018 (Hebrew):
<https://www.israelhayom.co.il/article/587241>

The report that was shelved: A new bill to combat corruption in the local government, Israel News, 18.1.2018
<https://bit.ly/2Y6FkKE>

The Supermarkets Law was approved in second and third readings – by a vote of one vote, Walla News, 9.1.2018 (Hebrew):
<https://news.walla.co.il/item/3125629>

"What will be opened and what will be closed on Shabbat? All you need to know about the "Supermarket Law""", Ynet News 9.1.18 (Hebrew):
<https://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-5068454,00.html>

Why and by whom is a report of recommendations for eradicating corruption in the local government shelved?, Branza News, 23.1.18, (Hebrew):
http://branza.co.il/site/article/article_view/news-1516727272
<https://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-5068454,00.html>

"Buses overflow as Tel Aviv launches public transportation on Shabbat," Times of Israel, 23.11.2019,
<https://www.timesofisrael.com/buses-overflow-as-tel-aviv-launches-public-transportation-on-shabbat/>

National
Standards
Score: 7

The provision of local services in Israel is dispersed between many agents, including local authorities, NGOs, government and municipal corporations and institutions such as public and private hospitals. The limited ability of poor local authorities (e.g., largely Arab or Orthodox Jewish municipalities) to maintain government standards incited the expansion of central government's authorities during the 2000s, and authorized the Ministry of the Interior to closely supervise and even to dissolve councils that fail to deliver proper services, at the cost of a less democratic local representation.

Service treaties in local authorities aim to standardize local services used by residents, while informing residents of their rights and the level of general services in their city or town. In recent years, many local authorities have taken part in this process and published information regarding local services on their website. Additionally, the privatization of social services continues to exhibit problems as weak social ministries struggle to regulate the quality and content of care. Several reports on education services point to ideological conflicts and poor management as well as an increase in the share of privately financed activities and consequent inequality.

Citation:

Bersler-Gonen, Rotem, "Service treaty in local government in Israel – review," Ministry of the interior website (December 2011) (Hebrew)

Dagan-Buzaglo, Noga, "Aspects in privatization in the education system," Adva Center 2010. (Hebrew)

Detal, Lior, "The Ministry of Education inc.: This is how hundreds of private bodies receive some 11 billion shekels," TheMarker 5.10.2014: <http://www.themarker.com/news/education/1.2450395> (Hebrew).

Paz-Fuchs, Amir and Bensimhon-Peleg, Sarit, "On the seam between the public and the private: Privatization and nationalization in Israel: Annual report 2013," The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, 2014 (Hebrew)

Spektor, Shiri, "Social rights and personal social services in Israel," The Knesset Research Center 21.10.2010:
<http://www.knesset.gov.il/mmm/data/pdf/m03158.pdf> (Hebrew)

"Local government in Israel," Knesset website (Hebrew)

"On nominated councils and democracy," Hithabrut website (NGO) (Hebrew)

Local government in Israel, Knesset website:
http://www.knesset.gov.il/lexicon/eng/LocalAuthorities_eng.Htm

"Quality of service provided to residents of local authorities," State Comptroller, 2016 (Hebrew):
http://www.mevaker.gov.il/he/Reports/Report_554/8b2456e1-a1dd-450f-af0c-df9fcca5d4f/106-service.pdf

The citizen's empowerment center in Israel: the implantation of the movement's decision to establish a regulatory authority over hospitals – review – April 2016:
<http://www.ceci.org.il/sites/citizens/UserContent/files/monitorreport/monitor%201622.pdf>

Effective
Regulatory
Enforcement
Score: 6

In general, Israel has a good record in dealing with powerful interest groups and enforcing regulation – the prime example being the Encouragement of Competition and Restriction of Centralism Act of 2013. The law was enacted after a public interministerial committee found that one of the most prevalent structural market failures was the presence of a small group of tycoons that used large pyramidal corporations to control the market. Therefore, it recommended several affirmative actions to regulate the corporative structure of large businesses and ensure the public interest. The government accepted the recommendations and legislated the aforementioned law.

On the other hand, there are many examples according to which the government does not operate with the public interest in mind. For example, in its report from 8 May 2018, the State Comptroller surveyed the Ministry of Health's policy on reducing smoking and tobacco consumption, and reproached the ministry for its policy discrepancies and close relationship with tobacco companies. One indicative example from that report is that the deputy minister for health, Ya'acov Litzman, and senior officials from his office met twice with representatives of tobacco companies in undisclosed and unreported meetings.

Adaptability

Domestic
Adaptability
Score: 7

Following OECD and academic recommendations, the Israeli government advances various administrative reforms regarding regulatory burdens, decision-making and long-term planning. Periodic progress reports show gradual improvement in the dissemination of information as well as in decision-making. The government continues to adapt its domestic structures to international and supranational developments in an ongoing and constructive process. The Ministry of Economy and Industry produces an annual report that reviews progress with regard to implementation of the OECD's recommendations. For example, in 2015 the report presented the progress made in the ability to regulate the imposition of labor laws. Moreover, in 2015, Israel signed the Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in tax matters of the OECD and ratified it in 2016. Many other agreements, such as the enforcement of the anti-bribery convention, have been signed, with policies adapted in Israel in accordance with OECD standards.

Citation:

Arlozorov, Merav. 2020. "Netanyahu's failing management forces Israel to crawl down to Pfizer". TheMarker. Retrieved from <https://www.themarker.com/coronavirus/premium-1.9303019>

Linder, Roni. 2020. "Israel is burning, said Sigal Sadetzki. Is it happening again, and how did we reach another lockdown." TheMarker. Retrieved from <https://www.themarker.com/news/health/premium-1.9356648>

Israel's State Comptroller. 2020a. Israel's handling of the Corona crisis – Special Interim report. Office of the State Comptroller.

Israel's State Comptroller. 2020b. Health system management in the outbreak of new diseases. Office of the State Comptroller.

International
Coordination
Score: 5

Israel takes part in several international efforts to foster global public goods. Israel joined the OECD in 2010. Since its accession to the OECD, Israel is largely involved and engaged in shaping and implementing the OECD recommendation in several fields.

However, most ministerial committees do not have specific responsibility for the implementation of OECD recommendations. The exception is the ministerial committee on regulatory affairs. Another example of Israel's intention to be part of international collaboration to foster public goods is its involvement in the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum, which convenes the Energy Ministers of Egypt, Cyprus, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority to cooperate and maintain dialogue regarding gas resources in the region.

Citation:

"Israel in the OECD," Minister of Treasury formal report (2010) (Hebrew).

"The Second Progress report on the implementation of the OECD recommendations: Labor market and social policies," Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute (2015) (Hebrew): <https://brookdale.jdc.org.il/publication/second-progress-report-implementation-oecd-recommendations-labour-market-social-policies-israel/>

"Progress report on the implementation of the OECD recommendations: Labor market and social policies," Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute (2012) (Hebrew):

<https://brookdale.jdc.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/OECD-Progress-report-HEB-Sep-2012.pdf>

"Beyond Energy: The Significance of the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum," INSS report (February 2019): <https://www.inss.org.il/publication/beyond-energy-significance-eastern-mediterranean-gas-forum/>

Organizational Reform

Self-monitoring
Score: 7

The Israeli government has installed various executive-branch institutions, both internally and externally, tasked with monitoring its activities and performance in areas such as procedures, financial transfers and human resources. For example, the Accountant General regularly audits financial decisions in ministries. The Civil Service Commission ensures that internal due processes are followed, and oversees human resources. However, in recent Knesset discussion regarding reforms to the Commission's work, critics have asserted that the Commission's work is inefficient. The PMO monitors implementation of the State Comptroller's recommendations as well as the internal accounting units in each ministry. Supplementary mechanisms for self-regulation include protocols and guidelines governing daily practice.

Citation:

"About: the Accountant General," Ministry of finance website (Hebrew):

<http://mof.gov.il/AG/About/Pages/About.aspx>

“About the Inspection General for State Comptroller Affairs,” PMO website (Hebrew): <http://www.pmo.gov.il/BikoretHamedina/Pages/Default.aspx>

Government Decision 482: adoption of the recommendations of the governability committee, 30.6.213, <http://www.pmo.gov.il/Secretary/GovDecisions/2013/Pages/des482.aspx>

“Notice number 3,” Civil service commission website (Hebrew) “About: Civil Service Commission,” Civil service commission website (Hebrew): <http://www.csc.gov.il/About/Pages/Roles.aspx>

Protocol – The Special Committee – Reforms in the Civil Service Commission: <https://oknesset.org/committee/meeting/11826/>

“Rules, procedures and guidelines for CEOs in the civil service,” Civil service commission 2013: <http://www.csc.gov.il/DataBases/Rules/Documents/BrochureCEOs.pdf> (Hebrew)

“The internal audit law 1992,” Official legislation (Hebrew)

Institutional
Reform
Score: 7

In 2018, the Basic Law: the Government and the Government Act of 2001 were slightly amended to formulate and delineate the cabinet’s authorities. This was done following State Comptroller reports that suggested that the cabinet’s authorities and jurisdictions are not legally specified, and that there are serious deficiencies regarding the extent and the quality of information being transferred to the cabinet. And yet, it is still unclear if the lack of an obligation to transfer information to the cabinet, any other deficiencies related to this, and other questions of decision-making authority, had been resolved.

Citation:

Arlozerov, Merav, “Israeli government; The reform that will end the Treasury’s single rule; Will lose a major part of its authorities,” TheMarker 13.2.2013 (Hebrew)

Azulai, Moran. “The Ministerial Committee for Legislation to Vote on the Cabinet Act.” In Ynet. June 10th, 2017. (Hebrew). <https://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-4973923,00.html>.

Base Law: The Government (Hebrew) (Full text: https://www.nevo.co.il/law_html/law01/999_119.htm)

Chaimowitz, Mordecai. “The Prime Minister of a State that Woke Up from a Dream to the Worst Nightmare in Its History.” In Nrg website. September 13th, 2013. (Hebrew). <https://www.makorrishon.co.il/nrg/online/1/ART2/506/704.html>.

Dahan, Momi, “Why do local authorities hold back pay?,” IDI website 15.11.2009 (Hebrew)

“Employing and management in the public service,” Conference in the name of Eli Horovitz 2013: <https://www.idi.org.il/media/2803303/public%20service%20b.pdf> (Hebrew)

Israel. The State Comptroller. “Operation ‘Protective Edge’: The Decision Making Processes in the Cabinet Regarding Gaza Strip Before and After Operation ‘Protective Edge;’ The Management [lit. Coping] with the Tunnels’ Threat,” Special audit Report, 2017. (Hebrew). (Also available here: <http://www.mevaker.gov.il/he/Reports/Pages/568.aspx>)

Milman, Omri, “Mayors to Kahlon: ‘If you would promote the differential allocation we won’t build in our territory’”, Calcalist 2.9.2015

Nuri, Dalya Gabrieli. "The Kitchen that Changed the Middle East." In Ha'aretz website. October 22nd, 2012. (Hebrew). <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/1.1847556>.

"The CEO of the social-economic cabinet approved the establishment of an authority for technological innovation," Minister of the Economy website 15.9.2014: <http://economy.gov.il/Publications/PressReleases/Pages/CabinetForTechnologicalInnovation.aspx> (Hebrew)

The Government Act, 2001 (Hebrew) (Full text: https://www.nevo.co.il/law_html/law01/999_006.htm)
Vigoda, Eran and Penny, Yuval, "Public sector performance in Israel" (October 2001), (Hebrew)

OECD, "Multi level Governance Reforms. Overview of OECD country experiences," 2017, <https://bit.ly/2AfHNdR>

II. Executive Accountability

Citizens' Participatory Competence

Political
Knowledge
Score: 8

Compared to other countries, Israeli citizens show high levels of interest in politics and political participation. In the Israeli Democracy Index published by the Israel Democracy Institute, the Political Participation Index published by the Economist, and other international comparative indices, Israeli citizens were found to participate widely and be highly interested in politics. Israel also has one of the region's highest internet-penetration rates (according to one source, reaching 82% as of January 2019); a lively, pluralistic and independent news media market; and a politically heterogeneous and active civil society.

That being said, the Israeli public appears to be, to put mildly, "unimpressed" by the government's capabilities and its levels of transparency. The Israeli Democracy Index 2020 recorded the lowest point in a decade in the public's trust in public institutions and government officials (particularly in the Knesset and the Supreme Court), as well as substantial erosion in the public's sense of social solidarity (Israel Democracy Index 2020). Indeed, in 2021, the Israeli public reported the highest level of trust in the army, and the lowest level of trust in government, parliament and political parties (Israel Democracy Index 2021).

Citizens usually rely on the media rather than official (government) information channels for information about public policies. Indeed, according to several surveys published in January 2019 prior to the first round of elections in April 2019, over 50% of all respondents use traditional news media outlets to access political information, while about 20% of all respondents use social media.

Citation:

Arlozorov, Meirav. "For the First Time: The Grade the Government Gave Itself in Achieving Goals." The Marker website. <https://www.themarker.com/news/politics/1.4002747>. April 6th, 2017 (Hebrew)

Arlozorov, Meirav. "The Professionalist Revolution of the Government of Israel." The Marker website. <https://www.themarker.com/allnews/1.5846420>. February 25th, 2018 (Hebrew)

Data Israel Survey Database of the Guttman Center for Public Opinion and Policy Research. Source for data of the surveys for the Eli Hurvitz Conventions. <https://dataisrael.idi.org.il/>

Digital 2019: Israel. A slideshow about Israel's state of telecommunications, by We Are Social and Hootsuite, thinktanks. Retrieved from <https://www.slideshare.net/DataReportal/digital-2019-israel-january-2019-v01>

"Freedom of the Press: Israel 2017," Freedom House, 2017 <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2017/israel>

Hermann, Tamar et.al., The Israeli Democracy Index 2016, The Israel Democracy Institute, Jerusalem 2016. <https://en.idi.org.il/media/7811/democracy-index-2016-eng.pdf>

Israel. The State Comptroller. "The Government's Transparency – Actions to Promote the Open Government," Annual Report, 68(3), 2018, Jerusalem, vol. 1, pp. 5-71. (also available here: http://www.mevaker.gov.il/he/Reports/Report_627/6dd1ae66-0117-438b-bef5-241d493c6f01/101-shkifut.pdf) (Hebrew)

"Joining the Open Government Partnership and the nomination of the 'Open Government Israeli Forum,'" Prime Minister Office website 2012 (Hebrew)

"The Government approved today the publication of all governmental databases" <https://www.themarker.com/news/politics/1.3053541> (Hebrew)

"The Knesset Presents: Advanced Committee Web Portals Now Available," <http://www.ch10.co.il/news/110674/#.V8R-rvI9670> (Hebrew)

"The Special Committee for the Transparency and Accessibility of Government Information," The Knesset Website (Hebrew): <http://main.knesset.gov.il/Activity/Committees/GovInfo/Pages/default.aspx>

The State Comptroller's official website in English. Numerous reports are in English and Arabic. <http://www.mevaker.gov.il/En/Pages/default.aspx>

The World Bank internet Users Data <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.P2>

"Yearly Report on the Implementation of the Law of Freedom of Information 2014" Ministry of Justice website – The Governmental Unit for Freedom of Information (Hebrew): <http://index.justice.gov.il/Units/YechidatChofeshHameyda/Report2014/index.html>

Herman, Tamar and Ella Heller, Tzipy Laza-Shoef, Fadi Omar, "The Israeli Democracy Index 2017. Summary," 2017, <https://en.idi.org.il/media/9837/israeli-democracy-index-2017-en-summary.pdf>

Herman, Tamar and Ella Heller, Tzipy Laza-Shoef, Fadi Omar. The Israeli Democracy Index 2018. Israel: The Israel Democracy Institute, 2018. Retrieved from <https://en.idi.org.il/publications/25031> (for the Hebrew version: <https://www.idi.org.il/books/25008>)

Tamar Hermann, "Democracy in Crisis? Israeli Survey Respondents Agree to Disagree," 13.12.2018, Podcast: <https://en.idi.org.il/podcasts/25310>

"Work Book for the Year of 2018." Containing links to all work books since 2011 and goals achievement reports since 2017 (reviewing 2016). <http://plans.gov.il/Plan2012/Pages/newWorkPlan2012.aspx>

Transparency International: “Corruption Perceptions Index 2018,”: <http://www.ti-israel.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/CPI-2018-Executive-summary-PRINT.pdf>

Tamar Hermann, 2021. “The Israeli Democracy Index”; https://en.idi.org.il/media/17276/final-madd-d2021-eng_web.pdf

The Israel Democracy Institute, 2021, ” IDI’s 2020 Democracy Index: Public Trust, Social Solidarity and Democracy in Danger”; <https://en.idi.org.il/articles/33415>

Open
Government
Score: 7

In recent years, the government has expanded its efforts with regard to policy transparency. In 2011, Israel joined the Open Government Partnership and, in 2016, the government announced the launch of a program designed to open all governmental databases to public access. This step is part of an ongoing policy of increasing transparency by expanding the authority of and funding for the Governmental Unit for Freedom of Information.

Most (if not all) governmental authorities have an official website and social media presence, some of which are available in languages other than Hebrew (e.g., English and Arabic). The websites offer a wide range of services, including information services (like press releases, law drafts for public commentary and policy explanations). One important example of this is the official website of the Ministry of Finance, which publishes the state budget (or more accurately its highlights) in a readable and keyword-searchable PDF format. The website also offers tools to observe changes in the budget and to compare it with the budgets from previous years.

The Knesset has a comprehensive website, offering the option to download all of the Knesset’s press releases, general assembly and various committee protocols (although excluding protocols from confidential committees, such as the Committee for Foreign Affairs and National Security Matters), draft and enacted laws, and even research papers that were handed to the various committees. The Knesset’s committee and general assembly meetings are usually recorded and made available to watch online. The Knesset also operates the National Legislation Database, which aims to make all legislation and legislative processes digitally accessible to the public.

Citation:

Bender, Eric. “The Transparency Committee Headed by MK Shaffir Shall Be Cancelled in the Next Knesset.” In Ma’ariv website.. April 18th, 2019. (Hebrew)

Government ICT Authority, “Open Government Action Plan for 2018-2019”: <http://yoursay.gov.il/cio/File/Index/nap3english/>

Liel, Dafna. “MK Shaffir’s Transparency Committee Will Be Cancelled?.” In Mako website.. April 18th, 2019. (Hebrew)

Transparency International, “Corruption Perceptions Index 2018”: <http://www.ti-israel.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/CPI-2018-Executive-summary-PRINT.pdf>

Tamar Hermann, "Democracy in Crisis? Israeli Survey Respondents Agree to Disagree": 13.12.2018, Podcast, <https://en.idi.org.il/podcasts/25310>

"Transparency International – Israel": <http://www.ti-israel.org/> (Hebrew)

Anna Ahronheim, "IDF comptroller to investigate army's readiness," JPost, 26.09.2018: <https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/IDF-comptroller-to-investigate-armys-readiness-567994>

Legislative Actors' Resources

Parliamentary
Resources
Score: 8

Two major Knesset departments, the Knesset research center, and the Knesset's legal advisory department serve as structural resources for acquiring information. The role of the research center is to equip Knesset members, committees and departments with information and research to meet the requirements of their parliamentary work, including reports on government activities. The research center is a massive document producer: it receives on average 500 research requests and produces 300 documents annually.

The Knesset's Parliamentary Oversight Coordination Unit (KATEF) has published several papers, which are available on its website and mostly comprise pamphlets. While the papers lack uniformity, a general direction is slowly and steadily emerging. One example of this is the series of pamphlets called Gate to the government, which provide advice on how to access government information. However, the unit is still very new and recent instability in the political system has not contributed to its path-finding processes.

Citation:

A Pamphlet Explaining About the Katef Unit's Vision, Fields of Operation, and Its Short History of Establishment, Undated. Available Online Through the Katef Unit's "About" Webpage (see link below). (Hebrew)

Alon, Gideon. "The fa is on the Shoulder [also Katef]." In: Israel Today website. July 23rd, 2017. (Hebrew): <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/article/492397>

Arlozorov, Meirav. "How the Knesset Broke the World Record in Proposing Private Bills." In Themarker. May 16th, 2017 (Hebrew): <https://www.themarker.com/news/politics/1.4091536>

Azulay, Moran. "Exposure: On the Way to a Revolution in Legislation and Oversight of the Knesset over the Government." In Ynet. February 2nd, 2017. (Hebrew): <https://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-4917549,00.html>.

Ben-David, Lior, "A comparative survey on the status, function and employment conditions of parliamentary assistants," Knesset research institute 4.11.2004 (Hebrew)

Blander, Dana. "Opinion as to the corrections to Base Law: the Knesset, Base Law: the Government and the Knesset Act Regarding the Authorities of Parliamentary Committees of Public Inquiry." The Israeli Democracy Institute. July 4th, 2017. (Hebrew)

"Correction: Debate on 'Hok Ha-Hesderim 2013,'" Open Knesset website (Hebrew)

“Is Bagatz mocking the petition against the treasury?,” Globes website 18.6.2014: <http://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1000947260> (Hebrew).

Israel. The Knesset. Katef – the Knesset Parliamentary Oversight Coordination Unit. Oversight Process of the Implementation of the Committee for the War on Poverty’s Report. Second Report. June 2018. Retrieved from <https://main.knesset.gov.il/Activity/Oversight/Pages/OversightSupervisoryProducts.aspx> (Hebrew)

Friedberg, Chen. How to Improve the Knesset as a Legislative and Oversight Body: Key Recommendations. Updated Edition. Israel: the Israel Democracy Institute, 2018. (Hebrew)

Galnoor, Itzhak, and Dana Blander. The Political System of Israel: Formative Years; Institutional Structure; Political Behaviour; Unsolved Problems; Democracy in Israel. Tel Aviv: Am Oved Publishers Ltd., 2013, two volumes. (Hebrew) “Information and research in the Knesset,” Knesset website (Hebrew)

“In the Knesset corridors,” IDI website (September 2010) (Hebrew)

“Katef Unit – About.” In the Katef unit’s website. <https://main.knesset.gov.il/Activity/Oversight/Pages/OversightAbout.aspx>

Knesset Research Center Summary of 2016 <https://www.knesset.gov.il/mmm/data/pdf/m03933.pdf> (Hebrew)

Public Inquiry Commissions Act, 1968 (Hebrew)

Shapira, Asaf, “A decade to the Knesset’s research and information center,” IDI website (September 2010) (Hebrew)

Lis, Johnathan. “Rivlin in the Knesset’s Inauguration: There are Times in Which the President is Compelled to Intervene,” Ha’aretz, October 4th, 2019, p. 6. (Hebrew)

The Knesset’s Rules of Procedure, up to date as of June 14th, 2018. (specifically article 135, “the Authorities of a Parliamentary Committee of Public Inquiry and the Presentation of a Report to the Knesset,” clause A; also article 127, “Failure of Arrival [to a committee] and Failure of Presenting of Information”). (Hebrew)

Zerahia, Zvi, “The treasury is deliberately holding out information from MPs so we can’t supervise it,” The Marker 7.1.2014: <http://www.themarker.com/news/1.2210843> (Hebrew)

Obtaining
Documents
Score: 7

According to Israel’s basic laws and the Knesset’s Rules of Procedure, the executive or appointed officials must attend and provide information to Knesset committees upon request, unless information is considered confidential. However, the law contains no specific provisions or sanctions for enforcement in cases of disobedience and lack of compliance or the provision of insufficient or inaccurate information. Thus, the parliament has only general or disproportionate means of response, such as passing a motion of no confidence or reporting to the Civil Service Commission. These options do not provide a solution to mundane problems, such as receiving unreliable information from the government.

Citation:

Fridberg, Chen, “The Knesset committees from an oversight perspective: Chronicle of a failure foretold?,” Studies in Israel’s revival 20 (2010) 49-79: <http://in.bgu.ac.il/bgi/iyunim/20/a3.pdf> (Hebrew)

Knesset Rules of Procedure, Section H, Chapter 7

Liel, Dafna. "The New Minister of Justice: MK Amir Ohana." In Mako website.. June 5th, 2019. (Hebrew)

Plesner, Yohanan, "There is Still Hope for Knesset Reform," IDI Website, 10/8/17, <https://en.idi.org.il/articles/18582>

Zerahia, Zvi, "The treasury is deliberately holding out information from PMs so we can't supervise it," TheMarker 7.1.2014: <http://www.themarker.com/news/1.2210843> (Hebrew)

Roznai, Yaniv, Liana Volach, Law reform in Israel, in "The Theory and Practice of Legislation," 6(2018)2, pp. 291-320: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/20508840.2018.1478330>

Summoning
Ministers
Score: 7

Parliamentary committees are able to summon ministers. According to the basic law's provisions on the Knesset, every committee may require a minister to appear before it, and the minister is obliged either to attend the meeting or send a representative to provide the required information. Officials invited by committees generally attend meetings as requested. However, ministers and other public figures do occasionally refuse requests or provide insufficient information, causing conflicts between the Knesset and the government. Committees have no real power to enforce sanctions in these cases. Moreover, they are not authorized to force a minister to provide information at a set date in order to better prepare for a meeting.

One exception to the rule detailed above is the Knesset's State Audit Committee. Since 1990, the audit committee is able to warrant the attendance of officials, and fine officials who failed to show up to the committee or sufficiently justify their lack of compliance (though the size of the fine is not specified).

Ataeli, Amichai, "The Evasion and its Punishment," Yedioth Aharonot, 07.07.2016, <http://www.yediot.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-4825644,00.html> (Hebrew)

Lis, Jonathan, "Instead of an investigation committee, a decoration committee: In the Knesset they are jealous of American congress," Haaretz 7.9.2014: <http://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politi/.premium-1.2426295> (Hebrew)

Plesner, Yohanan, "There is Still Hope for Knesset Reform," IDI Website, 10.8.2017, <https://en.idi.org.il/articles/18582>

"The Legislature's Authority to Inquire Information, and the Obligation to Provide True Information," Knesset Research and Information Center (December 2002). (Hebrew)

Summoning
Experts
Score: 9

Parliamentary committees are entitled to invite experts or any interested civilian to meetings. However, these figures are not obligated to attend, unlike civil servants or representatives of the executive. In addition, independent experts are not compelled to answer committee members' questions. Their testimony cannot serve as evidence and has no official status. Despite these issues, citizens who appear before Knesset committees are generally interested in voicing their opinions in order to reinforce their viewpoints in the eyes of decision-makers and the public.

Task Area
Congruence
Score: 3

Citation:

Blander, Dana. "Opinion regarding Corrections to Base Law: the Knesset, Base Law: the Government and the Knesset Act concerning the Authorities of Parliamentary Inquiry Committee." The Israeli Democracy Institute. July 4th, 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.idi.org.il/ministerial-committee/16190> (Hebrew).

Freidberg, Chen and Atmor, Nir, "How to improve the Knesset's position as a legislator and a supervisory body?" The Israel Democracy Institute 2013: <http://www.idi.org.il/media/2438022/00321913.pdf> (Hebrew).

Shapira, Asaf, "Citizens in the Parliamentary Committees," The Israel Democracy Institute, (September 2010). (Hebrew).

"The authority of the legislature to inquire information, and the obligation to provide true information," Knesset Research and Information Center (December 2002). (Hebrew).

Kam, Zeev, "Refused to show up in a Knesset committee after summoning? Punishment will follow" NRG 19.4.2016 <http://www.nrg.co.il/online/1/ART2/770/601.html> (Hebrew)

Knesset committees are currently not well structured for efficient government monitoring. The structure of the ministries and the parliament's committees diverges significantly: The Knesset has 12 permanent committees, while the number of ministries shifts according to political agreements, totaling 29 at of the time of writing (headed by 22 ministers, excluding the prime minister). Since parliamentary committees are divided by themes and not by ministerial responsibilities, they often struggle to gather and coordinate information. High turnover rates among representatives also makes it difficult to control professional and bureaucratic information. Although the number of committees is average by global standards, the combination of a small number of parliamentarians (120) and the usually broad coalitions results in only two-thirds of all members being available to sit on committees regularly. Some members of the Knesset sit on as many as five or six committees, inevitably impairing their committees' supervisory capabilities. This problem may be somewhat mitigated by the recent adoption of the Norwegian Law, which allows ministers who are members of the Knesset to quit the Knesset and be replaced by other members on their party list.

Citation:

Freidberg, Chen, "Monitoring of the executive by the parliament in Israel – potential and function," Doctoral Dissertation (2008) (Hebrew).

Freidberg, Chen and Atmor, Ronen, "How to improve the Knesset's position as a legislator and a supervisory body?" The Israel Democracy Institute 2013: <http://www.idi.org.il/media/2438022/00321913.pdf> (Hebrew).

Kenig, Ofer, "The new Israeli cabinet: An overview of the 33rd government of Israel," Israel Democracy Institute. (March 2013).

Kenig, Ofer, "Coalition building in Israel: A guide for the perplexed," Israel Democracy Institute. (February 2013).

"Knesset Committees," The Knesset Website:

https://www.knesset.gov.il/deSCRIPTION/eng/eng_work_vaada.htm

“Ministries,” Prime Minister’s Office Website (Hebrew):
<http://www.pmo.gov.il/IsraelGov/Pages/GovMinistries.aspx>

Twentieth Knesset: Government 34 – Current Members,
https://knesset.gov.il/govt/eng/GovtByNumber_eng.asp?current=1

Media

Media Reporting
Score: 6

Israel’s media industry is adapting to the global trend of decreased consumption of print and radio news media and the increased dominance of television, the internet, and social media websites. While the Israeli media sector has been bolstered in recent years by the creation of strong independent investigatory websites and blogs that have gained considerable attention in professional and public circles, other new popular outlets such as the free daily Israel Ha’yom often fail to deliver in-depth news coverage.

Despite a frequent tendency to focus on prominent and popular topics of the hour, the Israeli press, public television channels, and radio shows do offer interpretative and investigatory journalism that informs the public regarding policy decisions and long-term strategies. Nonetheless, the growing rate of news consumption through social media websites, the decline in citizens’ exposure to print media and TV, and the shallow nature of coverage in new media all significantly reduce the percentage of civilians exposed to in-depth journalistic information.

Citation:

Goldenberg, Roi, “‘The seventh eye’ website won the Israeli prize for critical media,” Globes 28.1.2013:
<http://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1000817765> (Hebrew)

Mann, Rafi and Lev-on, Azi, “Annual report: Media in Israel 2016 – agendas, uses and trends,” Ariel University School of Communication: https://store.ariel.ac.il/downloadable/download/sample/sample_id/6/ (Hebrew)

Persisco, Oren, “Restraint and prudence,” The seventh eye website: <http://www.the7eye.org.il/9774> (Hebrew).

“Freedom of the Press: Israel 2017,” Freedom House, 2017 <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2017/israel>

Parties and Interest Associations

Intra-party
Decision-Making
Score: 5

According to the last parliamentary election that took place on 23 March 2021, only two parties – Likud and Yesh Atid – can be considered major parties, having gained at least 10% of the popular vote.

Likud is characterized by intra-party democratic institutions. It chooses its candidates through primary elections and has elected representative institutions that take part in decision-making, such as decisions on whether the party will join or leave a governing coalition, and debates over policy stances. Nevertheless, despite its formal democratic procedures, the power of former Prime Minister Netanyahu on Likud's institutions is overwhelming, after effectively removing all his significant rivals from power.

Within the Yesh Atid party, some consultation with party members is conducted, but important decisions are made by senior members and specifically by the party leader. Moreover, the regulations authorize the party's leader to decide on the most important personnel issues, such as the list of electoral candidates.

Other parties are characterized by intra-party institutions which range from highly democratic to completely undemocratic.

Citation:

The Knesset and the Central Elections Committee website: "Parliamentary groups of the 24th Knesset," (in Hebrew) <https://votes24.bechirof.gov.il/>

Association
Competence
(Employers &
Unions)
Score: 8

Israel has a vibrant business community that often interacts with government departments and Knesset representatives in order to advance its agenda in Israel and abroad. At least three major business groups – the Federation of Israeli Chambers of Commerce, the Manufacturers' Association of Israel and a group for coordination between financial organizations – actively pursue policy goals through legal, regulatory or project-based perspectives. In general, Israeli businesses are well represented in the political sphere, and most economic-interest associations are highly capable of formulating relevant policy proposals. However, there is a significant degree of social inequality in this practice, as the Arab business sector seldom enjoys such close and productive ties with the government.

In addition, the Labor Federation is involved in policymaking. Given its weakening position over the last decades, its influence (e.g., in the adoption of the new pension legislation) was conditioned on cooperating with business associations (most prominently, the Manufacturers' Association).

Citation:

Israel. The Knesset. Protocol Number 827 from the Economic Affairs Committee. October 15th, 2018. (Hebrew). Retrieved from <https://main.knesset.gov.il/Activity/committees/Economics/Pages/CommitteeProtocols.aspx?ItemID=2074129>

"Law Bill." In the Knesset's official website (regarding "Bill of Limitation of the Advertisement and Marketing of Tobacco Products Act (Amendment Number 7), 2018," by several MKs). Last Seen:

October 28th, 2018. (Hebrew).
<https://main.knesset.gov.il/Activity/Legislation/Laws/Pages/LawBill.aspx?t=lawsuggestionssearch&lawitemid=2020202>.

Linder-Gantz, Roni. "The Advertisement Blitz: The Smoking Companies Are Out for a Final Battle." In TheMarker website. October 15th, 2018. (Hebrew). <https://www.themarker.com/news/health/.premium-1.6554561>.

Linder-Gantz, Roni. "The Day the Smoke around the Tobacco Advertisement Cleared – and the MKs Chose the Side of the Public." In TheMarker website. June 26th, 2018. (Hebrew). <https://www.themarker.com/consumer/health/.premium-1.6213257>.

Miller, Elhanan, "Finance minister says government has failed Arabs," Times of Israel, 24.02. 2014, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/finance-minister-says-government-has-failed-arabs/>.

"The chamber for coordination between financial organizations," Maot website (Hebrew)

Solomon, Shoshanna, "Netanyahu to head panel to tackle high-tech workers pinch," The Times of Israel, 28.12.2016, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-to-head-panel-to-tackle-high-tech-workers-pinch/>

The Industry Association Press Releases, <https://bit.ly/2ANM3kP>

"Israel Business Conference 2016," Globes, <http://www.globes.co.il/news/home.aspx?fid=8750>

"Netanyahu to open Globes Business Conference on Wed," Globes, 18.12.2018: <https://en.globes.co.il/en/article-netanyahu-to-open-globes-business-on-wed-1001265135>

Association
 Competence
 (Others)
 Score: 7

Noneconomic associations and NGOs have become increasingly influential in recent years, with over 47,000 non-profit organizations registered with the Ministry of Justice. Along with professional consultancy firms, they fill the gap left by state's privatization policies. Both social and environmental interest groups often formulate relevant policies and cooperate with government and academic bodies, and many of these groups have legal and research teams that support their policy engagement.

Citation:

ACRI. Anti-NGO Legislation in the Israeli Knesset. February 2016, <http://www.acri.org.il/en/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Anti-NGO-Bills-Overview-Updated-February-2016.pdf>

"Collaborative discourse in the Civil Society" March 2016, Civic Leadership in Israel, (Hebrew) http://migzar3.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/report-2016_web-1.pdf

Guidestar, the NGOs' website of Israel. By the Ministry of Justice. (Hebrew). Last seen: October 31st, 2018. <https://www.guidestar.org.il/home>

H CJ 3646/18 Yedid Centers of Rights in the Community V the Minister of Justice (Hebrew)

Kalian, Gil "The non-profit sector in Israel is smaller than thought," Calcalist 16/3/2016, <http://www.calcalist.co.il/local/articles/0,7340,L-3683649,00.html> (Hebrew)

Madhala, Shavit, et al. Israeli Welfare Organizations: A Snapshot. Policy Paper 03.2018. Internet Edition. Jerusalem: the Taub Center for Social Policy Studies in Israel, 2018.

Memorandum of Ordinances of Courts (Fees) (Representative Action), 2017. (Hebrew). Full text: https://www.nevo.co.il/law_html/law11/43143.htm

Nisan, Limor, "Civil society and the third sector in Israel," IDI paper for the 10th Caesarea conference, June 2010: <https://bit.ly/2YcMs8y> (Hebrew)

Regulations of Courts (Fees), 2007 (Hebrew)

Shamai, Barkat. "Starting Today: Significant Fees on Submission of Representative Actions." In Globes website. May 8th, 2018. (Hebrew).

The Associations Act, 1980 (Hebrew)

"The Clinic for Representation Populations from the Periphery Presented a Lawsuit Against the Ordinances Dictating for the First Time a High Fee at the Time of Submitting a Request for the Approval of Representative Action." In the Center for Clinical Legal Education's website. Last seen: November 4th, 2018. (Hebrew). [Here the statement of claim can be found]

The Obligation to Reveal as to Who is Supported by Foreign Statal Entity Act, 2011 (Hebrew)

"The transparency law has passed finally" Knesset website 12.7.2016, <http://main.knesset.gov.il/News/PressReleases/pages/press120716.aspx> (Hebrew)

Independent Supervisory Bodies

Audit Office
Score: 7

State audit functions in Israel are chiefly overseen by the State Comptroller. The State Comptroller is an independent agency that conducts audits of government ministries, local and municipal governments, and other independent, governmental organizations, including public universities, all military branches and government-funded corporations. The scope of audit powers is one of the broadest in the world, giving the comptroller jurisdiction over 1,400 organizations. The office receives its powers and authority from the Basic Law: The State Comptroller, which authorizes the comptroller to receive immediate information from the bodies undergoing audits. Additionally, the State Comptroller is tasked with auditing campaign and party finances, and reviewing the accounts and finances of party primary candidates and government ministers. The State Comptroller's Office is under the oversight of the Knesset State Audit Committee (Comptroller 2021).

However, allegations of intimidation and suppression at the State Comptroller's Office have swirled since the beginning of the current state comptroller's tenure. In January 2020, reports about the whitewashing of official audits surfaced, including a coverup of the Finance Ministry fudging a Finance Ministry audit of Israel's 2018 deficit figures in order that the official number met deficit reduction targets, concealing implications of Prime Minister Netanyahu's corrupt interventions in audits and reports, and forbidding staff from airing concerns and speaking to the media (Magid 2020). While the State Comptroller's Office reacted swiftly to the pandemic and issued several reports (as noted above), these allegations raise serious concerns and questions over the integrity, accuracy and quality of the State Comptroller's audits.

Citation:

Ministry of Justice (2021), "Amendments to Privacy Protection Act" Accessed 11 January 2021, Retrieved from: https://www.gov.il/he/departments/news/amendments_privacy_protection_act

Israel Government. 2017. Government Decision 3019 on the Renaming the Technology and Information Law Authority in the Ministry of Justice (in Hebrew). Access 20 January 2020. <https://www.gov.il/he/departments/policies/dec3019>.

Israel Government. 2006. Government Decision 4660 on the Establishment of a Legal Authority for Information Technologies and Protection of Privacy in the Ministry of Justice (in Hebrew). Access 20 January 2020. https://www.gov.il/he/departments/policies/2006_des4660.

Israel Government. 2020. Government Decision 4897 on the Authorization of the General Security Service to assist in the national effort to reduce the spread of the new coronavirus (in Hebrew). Access 20 January 2020.

Israel Government. 2020. Government Decision 2916 on the Authorization of the General Security Service to assist in the national effort to reduce the spread of the new coronavirus (in Hebrew). Access 20 January, 2020.

European Commission. 2011. Commission Decision of 31 January 2011 pursuant to Directive 95/46/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the adequate protection of personal data by the State of Israel with regard to automated processing of personal data. Access 20 January, 2020. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32011D0061>.

The Privacy Protection Agency. Organizational structure. Access 20 January 2020. https://www.gov.il/BlobFolder/generalpage/organizational_structure/he/OrganizationStructure.pdf.

The Privacy Protection Agency. 2020. First report in accordance to Act to Authorize the ISA to Assist in the National Effort to Contain the Spread of the Novel Coronavirus and to Promote Use of Civilian Technology to Locate Individuals who were in Close Contact with Patients (Temporary Provisions) 2020-5780 (in Hebrew). Access 20 January 2020. <https://www.gov.il/BlobFolder/reports/privacy-shabak-coronavirus/he/privacy-shabak-coronavirus.pdf>.

The Privacy Protection Agency. 2020. Interim Summary: The Privacy Protection Agency's Actions During the Corona Crisis (in Hebrew). Access 20 January 2020. https://www.gov.il/BlobFolder/news/_review_ppa_activity_corona/he/corona%20activity.pdf.

Ravia, Haim. 2020. The government has decided to freeze the law authorizing the GSS to help fight the Corona. Access 20 January 2020. <https://www.law.co.il/news/2020/06/08/government-freeze-law-to-track-covid-19-patients/>

Sela Steinman, Ronit. 2020. Sharp letter to the Minister of Justice: The Privacy Protection Authority is silenced and not heard. <https://www.law.co.il/news/2020/04/22/experts-warn-justice-minister-against-silencing-ppa/>

Ombuds Office

Score: 8

The state comptroller also serves as the state ombudsman. Under this role, the office is authorized to investigate complaints raised by the public regarding ministries, local authorities, state institutions and government corporations. Citizens may file a complaint free of charge if they believe that they were directly or indirectly harmed by an act or an activity of the government; if an act is against the law, without lawful authority, or violates principles of good governance; or if an act is unduly strict or clearly unjust.

The other body to be mentioned is the Commissioner for Soldiers' Complaints. Though authorized to handle complaints regarding the IDF only (specifically, complaints about injustices done to soldiers or soon-to-be-soldiers by the IDF), the authorization to submit a complaint is very wide and covers a variety of issues.

Citation:
Comptroller and the Ombudsman official website:
<http://www.mevaker.gov.il/sites/Ombudsman/Pages/default.aspx?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>
(Hebrew).

Israel. The Commissioner for Soldiers' Complaints. Annual Report 46, 2017. Tel Aviv: The Security Ministry Press, 2018 (Hebrew): <http://www.nakhal.idf.il/1073-he/Nakhal.aspx>

Israel. The Commissioner for Soldiers' Complaints. Annual Report 47, 2018. Tel Aviv: The Security Ministry Press, 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.mod.gov.il/nakhal/Pages/Reports.aspx> (Hebrew)

Israel. The State Ombudsman. Annual Report 45 for the Year of 2018. June 24th, 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.mevaker.gov.il/sites/DigitalLibrary/Pages/Publications/277.aspx> (Hebrew)

Lev Ram, Tal. "The Commissioner for Soldiers' Complaints to Liberman and Eizenkot: The IDF isn't Ready for War."
Ma'ariv Online. July 13th, 2018 (Hebrew): <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/military/Article-661030>.

Limor, Yoav. "'The IDF is in Peak Preparedness, the Commissioner for Soldiers' Complaints is Wrong.'" Israel Hayom. September 19th, 2018 (Hebrew): <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/article/588377>.

Office of the Ombudsman brochure:
http://www.mevaker.gov.il/he/Ombudsman/Guidecomplainant/Documents/ntz_english.pdf

"Security System Comptroller Eitan Dahan Appointed as Stand-In Commissioner for Soldiers' Complaints." In Maariv website. January 9th, 2019. (Hebrew)

"The Ombudsman yearly review number 43 for 2016," The State comptroller Website (Hebrew), <http://www.mevaker.gov.il/he/Reports/Pages/591.aspx>

The State comptroller and Ombudsman of Israel. Website: State [http://www.mevaker.gov.il/\(X\(1\)S\(5rxc1pa0jpc1qkpdphpupj5p\)\)/En/Pages/default.aspx?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1](http://www.mevaker.gov.il/(X(1)S(5rxc1pa0jpc1qkpdphpupj5p))/En/Pages/default.aspx?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1)

Ziton, Yoav, and Yaron Drukman. "The Complaints Commissioner Warns of Deficiencies in the Readiness for War: 'You Will Fall Off Your Feet from the Reports.'" In Ynet. June 25th, 2018 (Hebrew): <https://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-5296079,00.html>.

Ziton, Yoav. "The Outrage of the Harsh Report Over the IDF's Readiness for War: 'There were Negligence, Carelessness and Unacceptable Behaviour [lit. "Unworthy Culture"].'" Ynet. September 26th, 2018 (Hebrew): <https://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-5358401,00.html>.

Data Protection
Authority
Score: 7

There are several authorities that are accountable for handling technical issues of data protection and privacy. First, there is the State Comptroller, who can inspect and scrutinize all governmental bodies in the respect to data protection and privacy, and has powers to hold government bodies to account if necessary. Though these powers for scrutiny are only occasionally exercised. Second, civilian sector operations are initiated and regulated by the

Management of Security in Public Corpora Act 1998, which introduced a strong cybersecurity apparatus.

An additional body is the Authority for the Protection of Privacy (APP), which is located within the Ministry of Justice, and reports to the Ministry of Justice and the Knesset. According to the Protection of Privacy Act, one of the APP's roles is to monitor the compliance of public institutions with information security and privacy regulations. In addition, the APP manages the Information Databases Registrar, which registers and records databases, and ensures their compliance with the law and information security regulations.

Nevertheless, according to the State Comptroller, the APP lacks the resources to properly accompany governmental projects. Since 2011, the APP has not been able to ensure the full compliance of public institutions with some of the Protection of Privacy Act's regulations concerning inter-institutional information transfers (i.e., public institutions must report to the APP if they transfer information between themselves). Consequently, the APP has limited authority to penalize non-compliance.

Citation:

"About the Authority for the Protection of Privacy | The Authority for the Protection of Privacy." In the Authority for the Protection of Privacy's official website.. Last updated: August 15th, 2019. (Hebrew)

Ministry of Justice, "The Privacy Protection Authority," https://www.gov.il/en/Departments/the_privacy_protection_authority

Israel. The Prime Minister's Office. Promotion of National Regulation and Governmental Guidance in Cyber Defense. Government Decision number 2443. February 15th, 2015. (Full text: https://www.gov.il/he/Departments/policies/2015_des2443) (Hebrew)

Israel. The State Comptroller. "Aspects in the Protection of the Privacy in Information Databases," Annual Report, 69(2), 2019, Jerusalem, vol. 1, pp. 3-88. Retrieved from <https://www.mevaker.gov.il/sites/DigitalLibrary/Pages/Reports/1427-1.aspx> (Hebrew)

Israel. The State Comptroller. "Aspects in the State's Preparations in Defense of the Cyber Space," Annual Report, 67(1), 2018, Jerusalem, vol. 1, pp. 3-10. (Hebrew) (Also available here: http://www.mevaker.gov.il/he/Reports/Report_552/b9842c3e-e157-4f16-9529-df1aca2002cb/101-cyber.pdf).

Israel. The State Comptroller. "The Preparedness [lit. arrangement, deployment] of Essential Organizations [lit. bodies] for Cyber Defense," Annual Report, 69(2), 2019, Jerusalem, vol. 4, pp. 2065-2073. Retrieved from <https://www.mevaker.gov.il/sites/DigitalLibrary/Pages/Reports/1427-35.aspx> (Hebrew)

Aridor-Hershkovitz, Rachel and Tehilla Shwartz Altshuler, Privacy Protection Bill, 2019-5779. Summary, Israel Democracy Institute, Jerusalem November 2019, <https://en.idi.org.il/media/13429/privacy-protection-bill-2019-5779-a-proposed-draft-en.pdf>

Solomon, Shoshanna, "Data is up for grabs under outdated Israeli privacy law, think tank says," ToI, 31.01.2019, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/data-is-up-for-grabs-under-outdated-israeli-privacy-law-think-tank-says/>

Goichman, Rafaela. "A Hacker Attack or Just an Amateurish Website? What Brought Down the Website Made for the Elections Day," TheMarker, November 1st, 2018, p. 2. (Hebrew).

Goichman, Rafaela. “‘There Was No Internet Reception’: the Crashed Elections Results’ Website Still Isn’t Back Running.” In TheMarker website. November 1st, 2018. (Hebrew). <https://www.themarker.com/technation/1.6614011>.

Memorandum for the Cyber Security and the National Cyber Directorate Act, 2018. (Hebrew). Full text: https://www.nevo.co.il/law_html/law11/44319.htm

Siboni, Gabi, and Ido Sivan-Sevilla. Cyber Regulation. Memorandum 180. Tel Aviv: The Institute for National Security Studies, 2018. (Hebrew).

“The Government ICT Authority | About the Government ICT Authority.” In the Government ICT Authority’s official website. Last updated: May 2nd, 2015. (Hebrew). https://www.gov.il/he/Departments/about/about_ict_authority.

“The Ministry of Justice – About.” In the Privacy Protection Council’s official website.. Last seen: October 24th, 2019. (Hebrew)

“The National Cyber Directorate | About the National Cyber Directorate.” In the Israel National Cyber Directorate’s official website. Last updated: July 14th, 2019. (Hebrew). <https://www.gov.il/he/Departments/about/newabout>.

“The National Cyber Directorate.” In the Israel National Cyber Directorate’s official website (main page). Last seen: November 1st, 2018. (Hebrew). https://www.gov.il/he/Departments/israel_national_cyber_directorate.

“The National Cyber Directorate | The Directorate is Happy to Announce the Opening of the First Course for the Training of Certified Inspectors in the Market [lit. economy].” In the Israel National Cyber Directorate’s official website. September 12th, 2018. (Hebrew). <https://www.gov.il/he/Departments/news/supplychaintraining>.

The Protection of Privacy Act, 1981. (Hebrew; full text: https://www.nevo.co.il/law_html/Law01/087_001.htm)

Ziv, Amitai, ‘A Shin Bet Puppet.’ What Went Wrong With Israel’s Cybersecurity Agency, Haaretz, 29.8.2018: <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/business/.premium-cybersecurity-agency-drops-role-of-protecting-business-1.6429506>

Address | Contact

Bertelsmann Stiftung

Carl-Bertelsmann-Straße 256
33311 Gütersloh
Germany
Phone +49 5241 81-0

Dr. Christof Schiller

Phone +49 30 275788-138
christof.schiller@bertelsmann-stiftung.de

Dr. Thorsten Hellmann

Phone +49 5241 81-81236
thorsten.hellmann@bertelsmann-stiftung.de

Pia Paulini

Phone +49 5241 81-81468
pia.paulini@bertelsmann-stiftung.de

Altshuler A., Mandelkern R. & R. Karadag (2022).
Israel Report. Sustainable Governance Indicators.
Bertelsmann Stiftung: Gütersloh.
<https://doi.org/10.11586/2022101>

As a living document, this report is updated and revised
on an annual basis. The authors cited here are the most
recent authors to have contributed to this report.

Previous report versions can be accessed here:
[SGI 2022 | Publications \(sgi-network.org\)](https://www.sgi-network.org)

www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de
www.sgi-network.org